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AIR-MARSHAL SIR ARTHUR WILLIAM TEDDER, K.C.B.

A Record of the War

THE
FOURTEENTH QUARTER

January 1, 1943—March 31, 1943

PHILIP GRAVES

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P R E F A C E

The Fourteenth Quarter describes a period in which the Allies, although they did not make as rapid progress as they had hoped in North Africa, were nevertheless able to keep the initiative there and still more in Russia, where the Red Army won notable triumphs. The capture of the Army of Field-Marshal Paulus was the most striking of these and was the heaviest blow a German Army had sustained since the battle of Jena. This remarkable campaign is described by Lieutenant-Colonel H. G. de Watteville, who pays a high tribute to the admirable work of the Russian General Staff, and suggests that the remarkable recovery of Kharkov and the Upper Donetz line by von Manstein's fortunate counterstroke in February may have saved the Germans from still more crushing disasters. I am greatly indebted to Mr. S. W. Mason, Parliamentary correspondent of *The Times*, for his full and careful account of the activities of our King, his Ministers and Parliament during this eventful quarter, and I would also express my thanks to Sir Frank Brown for his account of Indian affairs in Chapter XIII, and to Mr. Douglas Brown for his excellent narrative of the state of Germany and Italy in Chapter VII. I also thank the naval, military and aeronautical correspondents of *The Times* for their advice and aid, and record my great indebtedness to its map department.

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CHAPTER I

THE GRAND ALLIANCE

I : CASABLANCA AND ADANA

President Roosevelt began 1943 by giving the Press a statement on the anniversary of the Declaration of the United Nations in which he said that the Allies were now passing from the defensive to the offensive. Their present task was threefold.

They must press forward with the massed forces of free humanity until the "bandit" assault on civilization had been crushed ; they must so organize the nations that the forces of barbarism could never break loose again ; they must co-operate so that mankind might enjoy the state of civilization which they had reached in peace and freedom. Unity had been achieved on the battle front, but it must be maintained in the equally complex task of planning the post-war world. The most important war objective was to see that peace when achieved was maintained ; the details of future planning mattered less than its aim of securing and ensuring peace.

On January 7 the President, addressing the 78th United States Congress, reviewed the events of 1942. He was optimistic about the Pacific campaign. The most important Allied victory there had been the Battle of Midway which "secured for our use communication lines stretching thousands of miles in every direction," and he concluded his summary of the Far Eastern situation with the confident assertion :

"The period of our defensive attrition in the Pacific is passing. Now our aim is to force the Japanese to fight. Last year we stopped them. This year we intend to advance."

He turned from the Far East to Europe. He spoke of the months of secret planning and preparation that had preceded the North African landing, the "well-timed and splendidly executed offensive from Egypt" and the "amazing growth" of American air strength, which few Americans seemed to realize, although "I am sure your enemy does." In Africa they were shooting down "two enemy planes for every one we lose," and in

the Pacific four for every one. Powerful units of the French Army and Navy were coming into action with the United Nations' forces. Of the future he said :

"I cannot prophesy. I cannot tell you when or where the United Nations are going to strike next in Europe. But we are going to strike and strike hard. . . . But I can tell you that, no matter where and when we strike by land, we and the British and the Russians will hit them from the air heavily and relentlessly. . . . Hitler and Mussolini will understand the enormity of their miscalculation that the Nazis would always have the advantage of superior air power. . . . That superiority has gone for ever. Yes—the Nazis and the Fascists have asked for it—and they are going to get it."

Later, he spoke—and perhaps this was the most important part of his address—of the outlook of the American people and the American soldiers. They wanted a lasting peace and they wanted permanent employment. They did not want an America of under-nourishment and slums ; and, he added, "they want no get-rich-quick era of bogus prosperity which will end for them in selling apples at the street corner, as happened after the bursting of the boom in 1931." He dissented strongly from those who warned him that this was no time "to talk of a better America."

As for peace, he shuddered to think of the results of an inconclusive end to the war. Some Americans thought

"that this nation can end this war comfortably and then climb back into an American hole and pull the hole in after them." But they had mostly learnt that no hole could be dug so deep as to be safe from "predatory animals." They must draw the teeth of those wild beasts, or "they will be at our throats once more in a short generation." The Axis must be disarmed and kept disarmed, and they must abandon that philosophy and the teaching of that philosophy that had brought so much suffering to the world. And he asked Congress to remember that American safety would be threatened again unless greater economic stability came to the rest of the world. "We cannot make America an island in either a military or an economic sense."

Meanwhile the Germans, with some Italian assistance, were trying by various means to sow discord among the Allies. Hints that Russia was planning to establish suzerainty, if not actual sovereignty, over the nations of Eastern Europe ; assertions that American capitalism was tightening its grip on the British colonial Empire ; boasts that the Allies would find the Axis forces in Tunisia too strongly entrenched to be expelled, gigantic claims of

sinkings by the U-boats, all were designed to cover the deep anxiety caused by the position of the German Armies in Russia. Already the force surrounded outside Stalingrad was in desperate straits. Elsewhere the Russian Armies had broken into positions which their foes had deemed impregnable or were threatening new offensives that might carry them through the German lines. Hence the attempt by any and every means to weaken the unity and shake the resolution of the Allies, more especially of the English-speaking nations. And with this went other attempts, devious or direct, to "draw" the Western Powers into some disclosure of their military and political plans. Little as the Germans liked to admit it, they had lost the initiative to the United Nations. Their chance of regaining it rapidly was small. For the time being all they could do was to "hang on," following a defensive political and military strategy, and to try to discover what the Anglo-American combination might be planning.

On January 27 they obtained no detailed information indeed, but a general indication of the aims and decisions of the western Powers which cannot have cheered them greatly. On the previous night the Ministry of Information had issued the following announcement :

"The President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Great Britain have been in conference near Casablanca since January 14. They were accompanied by combined Chiefs of Staff of the two countries, namely :

FOR THE UNITED STATES : General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army ; Admiral E. J. King, C.-in-C. U.S. Navy ; Lieutenant-General H. H. Arnold commanding U.S. Army Air Force.

FOR GREAT BRITAIN : Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound, First Sea Lord ; General Sir Alan Brooke, C.I.G.S. ; Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal, Chief of Air Staff.

They were assisted by : Lieutenant-General B. B. Somervell, Commanding General Services of Supply, U.S. Army ; Field-Marshal Sir John Dill, head of the British Joint Staff Mission in Washington ; Vice-Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, Chief of Combined Operations ; Lieutenant-General Sir Hastings Ismay, Chief Staff Officer to the Minister of Defence ; together with a number of staff officers from both countries.

They have received visits from Mr. Murphy¹ and Mr. Macmillan ; from General Eisenhower, the C.-in-C. Allied Expeditionary Force in North Africa ; from Admiral of the Fleet Sir Andrew Cunningham,

¹ President Roosevelt's personal representative in French North Africa.

Naval Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force in North Africa ; from General Spaatz, Air Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force in North Africa ; from General Clark, U.S. Army, and from Middle East H.Q. from General Sir Harold Alexander, Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder, and Lieutenant-General F. M. Andrews, U.S. Army.

The President was accompanied by Mr. Harry Hopkins and was joined by Mr. Averell Harriman. With the Prime Minister was Lord Leathers, the British Minister of War Transport.

For ten days the combined staffs have been in constant session, meeting two or three times a day, and recording progress at intervals to the President and the Prime Minister. The entire field of war was surveyed theatre by theatre throughout the world, and all resources were marshalled for the more intense prosecution of the war by land, sea and air. Nothing like this prolonged discussion between two Allies has ever taken place before. Complete agreement was reached between the leaders of the two countries and their respective staffs upon war plans and enterprises to be undertaken during the campaign of 1943 against Germany, Italy and Japan, with a view to drawing the utmost advantage from the markedly favourable turn of events at the close of 1942. Premier Stalin was cordially invited to meet the President and the Prime Minister, in which case the meeting would have been held very much farther to the east. He was, however, unable to leave Russia on account of the great offensive which he himself, as commander-in-chief, is directing. The President and the Prime Minister realize to the full the enormous weight of the war which Russia is successfully bearing along her whole land front, and their prime object has been to draw as much of the weight as possible off the Russian Armies by engaging the enemy as heavily as possible at the best selected points.

Premier Stalin has been fully informed of the military proposals. The President and the Prime Minister have been in communication with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. They have apprized him of the measures which they are undertaking to assist him in China's magnificent and unrelaxing struggle for the common cause.

The occasion of the meeting between the President and the Prime Minister made it opportune to invite General Giraud to confer with the combined Chiefs of Staff and to arrange for a meeting between him and General de Gaulle. The two Generals have been in close consultation.

The President and the Prime Minister and the Combined Staffs, having completed their plans for the offensive campaign of 1943, have now separated to put them into active and concerted execution. (Dated, January 24, 1943.)

In a talk to the Press correspondents who had come to Casablanca from Algiers, President Roosevelt spoke with great freedom. The significance of the meeting was that "combined staffs had discussed and agreed on problems covering literally the whole world. It was global strategy that they discussed and their future plans were based upon their determination to maintain their initiative against the Axis Powers wherever their forces were to be found. Their plans included the dispatch of all possible material aid to Russia and assistance to the

Chinese, now in their sixth year of war. From this the President went on to speak of peace terms, and here he emphatically voiced the opinion of the average man in Britain and, so far as one can judge it from a distance, in the invaded or occupied countries. He may also be presumed to have reflected the views of the majority of his own people. Peace, he said, could only be brought about by the complete elimination of Japanese and German military power. He reminded the British correspondents that that great American soldier, General U. S. Grant, had been nicknamed "Unconditional Surrender" Grant, and to-day Germany, Italy and Japan had to surrender unconditionally if the peace of the world was to be reasonably assured. This did not mean that Germans, Italians and Japanese were to be put to the sword, but it did mean that the philosophies based on fear, hate and racial dominance were to be destroyed.¹ "It was then that the President suggested," wrote the special correspondent of *The Times* (*loc. cit.* January 27), . . . that we might call this the "Unconditional Surrender Meeting."

Mr. Churchill expressed his full agreement with the President and repeated the phrase "unconditional surrender" when he defined the purpose of the United Nations. Like the President, he hoped much from the meeting of the two French Generals, but like him he had left details to them, and merely insisted on the importance of the early liberation of France. After the meeting the French Press service in London published the following joint statement by the Generals :

"We have met. We have talked. We have registered our entire agreement on the end to be achieved, which is the liberation of France and

¹ He paid Italian Fascism an undeserved compliment if he suggested that it had a philosophy, instead of a doctrine composed of ill-assorted bits and pieces of Sorel, Nietzsche, Machiavelli, Gentile and many more. "Nazi" philosophy derived partly from the deification of the State, of which Fichte, Treitschke, Hegel and Marx (with Luther as a fore-runner) had been prophets in their several ways, and partly from a racial "philosophy" based on the unproven speculations of a few talented amateurs, e.g. Gobineau, and a few professional ethnologists and archæologists of the type that transforms a molehill of fact into a mountain of theory. Its destruction will be more difficult for it is not enough to merely prove that it "does not pay."

triumph of human liberties by the total defeat of the enemy. This end will be attained by the union in war of all Frenchmen fighting side by side with all their Allies."

From Casablanca President Roosevelt, after visiting Marrakesh in Mr. Churchill's company, flew to Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, now garrisoned by a mainly negro force of American troops, where he saw President Barclay and learned of the development of anti-U-boat operations from this base. Thence he crossed the Atlantic to Natal Bay on the tip of the eastern bulge of Brazil.

On January 28 he met President Vargas there. On the following day the two Presidents issued an important joint statement :

They had conferred on the problems of the war in general and also with special references to the Brazilian-United States effort. The Brazilian President had announced increased anti-U-boat activity on the part of the Brazilian air and naval forces. President Roosevelt gave his ally full information of the results of the Casablanca Conference and had emphasized the necessity of a peace which must prevent the Axis from delivering attacks on the civilized world in the future. Both Presidents were in complete agreement on the subject of West Africa. Dakar and the neighbouring coasts must never again be allowed to threaten the Americas with invasion or blockade.

They added : "This meeting has given us the opportunity to survey the future safety of all the Americas. In our opinion each of the Republics is interested and affected to an equal degree. In unity there is strength. It is the aim of Brazil and the United States to make the Atlantic Ocean safe for all. We are deeply grateful for the almost unanimous help our neighbours are giving to the great cause of democracy throughout the world." The announcement on February 7 that Brazil had decided to subscribe to the declaration of the United Nations and to the Atlantic Charter and regarded the state of belligerency as including Japan were among the immediate consequences of an important meeting.

On January 31 President Roosevelt reached Florida by air with his colleagues. At his first Press Conference after his return (February 2) he emphasized that the Casablanca Conference had been essentially a military meeting in which plans for winning the war had been prepared as far ahead as possible and the combined staffs had reached a unanimous agreement, part of which was that the Allies would never make a negotiated armistice. With regard to Fighting French leadership he said that General Giraud had told him that he was endeavouring to settle the numerous problems that confronted him

as quickly as possible, and that the sole criterion was whether a man wanted to fight the "Boche" or not—which, said Mr. Roosevelt, "is not a bad line to take." He added that General Giraud's and General Leclerc's forces had been working in close co-operation by wireless when they were still 300 miles apart and had maintained that co-operation until they met.

As to Chinese and Russian non-representation at Casablanca he observed that Russia was not at war with Japan, and China, although at war with Germany, was not in hostile contact with German forces. Of his visit to Brazil he said that the Brazilians were building destroyers and that President Vargas thought he was not getting enough priority on some material from the U.S. which was required for the war against the U-boats. This was being attended to and more patrol aircraft were being sent to Brazil. On February 3 the President gave an account of the Casablanca Conference to the Pacific War Council.

While the American President had gone westward Mr. Churchill had turned to the east again. From Egypt he arrived by air at Adana in Turkey where he met President Inönü on January 30. The following official account of the ensuing conversations was issued in London late on February 1 :

"At his request, Mr. Winston Churchill, Prime Minister, representing his Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, came to Turkey as guest of the Government of the Republic. On his arrival the Prime Minister was received in audience by the President of the Republic who was at Adana. Several interviews took place between the Turkish and British statesmen and experts, whose names follow :

FOR TURKEY : M. Shukru Sarajoglu, President of the Council of Ministers ; Marshal Fevzi Çakmak, Chief of the General Staff ; M. Numan Menemencioglu, Minister for Foreign Affairs ; M. Feridun Erkin, Minister Plenipotentiary, Assistant Secretary-General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs ; General Şefik Çakmak, Air Adviser of the Turkish General Staff ; Colonel Fâhik Kayabali, Chief of the Operations Section of the General Staff.

FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM : The Right Hon. Winston Churchill, Prime Minister ; Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, H.M.'s Ambassador ; Sir Alexander Cadogan, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs ; General Sir Alan Brooke, C.I.G.S. ; General Sir Maitland Wilson, C.-in-C. Persia and Iraq Command ; General Sir Harold Alexander, C.-in-C. Middle East Forces ; Lieut.-General Sir Wilfred Lindsay, Lieut.-General in Charge of Administration, Middle East ; Air Marshal

R. M. Drummond, Deputy Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief Middle East ; Commodore J. G. Dundas, Chief of Staff to C.-in-C. Mediterranean.

The bonds of friendship and mutual good understanding between Turkey and the United Kingdom have been confirmed and still further strengthened by the frank conversations which ensued at this meeting. The Turkish statesmen reviewed the course of Turkish policy during the last critical years, and the Prime Minister was able to assure them that his Majesty's Government had followed it with full sympathy and understanding. The Turkish and British statesmen together examined the present situation in Europe and particularly in those regions in which Turkey is directly interested.

On all the principal points identity of view was established. Agreement was reached on the matter in which Great Britain and the United States would be able to help Turkey materially to consolidate her own general defensive security, and conversations on that subject took place between the Turkish and British military advisers.

The Prime Minister having so recently been in conference with the President of the United States of America could speak with full knowledge of the views of President Roosevelt, who had warmly welcomed the proposal for this meeting. Consideration was also given to post-war problems, on which agreement was again reached. After these interviews, which took place on January 30 and 31 at Adana, both Turkish and British statesmen expressed themselves as fully satisfied."¹

Details of the visit published at Cairo showed that Mr. Churchill was met by M. Sarajoglu when his aeroplane alighted on the Adana airfield. Turkey being still neutral, the Service chiefs who accompanied him were in mufti, but Turkish neutrality did not prevent Hurricanes of the Turkish Air Force from escorting his aeroplane for part of the return flight. Turkish comment was most friendly and the feelings of the Government were reflected by the Turkish Press, which refused to be alarmed by German propaganda that the British were attempting to "force the Turks into the war." In this connection Mr. Churchill uttered the caution in Cairo and repeated it in Parliament on February 11 against reading more into the published *communiqué* on the conference than it conveyed. It was, he said, an essential British and Allied interest, and especially a British interest, that Turkey

"should become well-armed in all the apparatus of modern war and that her brave infantry shall not lack the essential weapons which play a decisive part . . . to-day. These weapons we and the United States are now for the

¹ The writer has used abbreviations which were not in the original and has on occasion spelt Turkish names in a manner which gives a better idea of their pronunciation than the official style, e.g. "Chakmak" for "Cakmak," Turkish "c" being the "ch" in "church."

first time in a position to supply to the full capacity of the Turkish . . . communications. We can give them as much as they are able to take. . . .

At our conference I made no request of Turkey except to get this rearmament business thoroughly well organized, and a joint British and Turkish military mission is now sitting at Ankara in order to press forward to the utmost the development of the general defensive strength of Turkey, the improvement of the communications, and by the reception of the new weapons to bring its army to the highest pitch of efficiency. I am sure it would not be possible to pry more closely into this part of our affairs. Turkey is our ally. Turkey is our friend. We wish her well and we wish to see her territory rights and interests effectively preserved. We wish to see, in particular, warm and friendly relations established between Turkey and our great Russian ally. . . .

Before his visit to Adana Mr. Churchill had discussed offensive plans drawn up at Casablanca with the service chiefs in Cairo. After it he paid a brief visit to Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus, which had now become a strong military advanced base for our forces in the Middle East. He was heartily welcomed by the notables of the island to whom and to its people his visit was most heartening. In his address to representatives of the islanders he spoke most warmly of "heroic Greece, which in these days has revived her fame of ancient times," and of British relations with Turkey, and urged the Cypriots not to dissipate the unexpected if temporary prosperity which had sprung from the influx of large numbers of troops into the island. He next was flown to Tripoli, landing on the Castel Benito aerodrome on February 3, where he was almost mobbed by the enthusiastic troops whom he afterwards addressed and thanked warmly for their exploits. Next day he entered the city in triumph to be greeted rapturously by the troops and to review part of the Eighth Army, including the 51st (Highland) and also the New Zealand Division, which had both played such a distinguished part in the Battle of Egypt.¹ After this stirring and fruitful journey he returned by air to London.

The military changes adopted at Casablanca after consultation and discussion by the combined staffs were announced by Mr. Churchill in Parliament on February 11. They were of high importance. It was agreed that when the Eighth Army passed into the North African

¹ For his impressions of his visit see Chapter IX, Section 2.

theatre of operations it should come under the orders of General Eisenhower, the Allied Commander-in-Chief. The following were the chief appointments under the new arrangements :

[General Alexander, from C.-in-C. Middle East became Deputy C.-in-C. under General Eisenhower "for the immediate tactical control of the First and Eighth Armies. His place as C.-in-C. Middle East was taken by General Wilson, who had commanded in Greece and Syria, and was now to take charge of the forces in Libya, Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Cyprus. The "Piforce," or Tenth Army, i.e. the troops in Iraq and Persia, were a separate command. Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Pownall, who had commanded the Ceylon garrison, took over this command later from Lieutenant-General Quinan.¹

At sea, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Andrew Cunningham, who already commanded all the British and American naval forces in the western and central Mediterranean, extended his command eastward "so as to comprise effectively all the cognate operations inside the Mediterranean," while the Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean [then Rear-Admiral Sir Henry Harwood] would become, "with his headquarters in Egypt, Commander-in-Chief of the Levant, dealing also with the Red Sea and all approaches from that quarter."²

The most extensive changes were in the air commands. Air Chief Marshal Tedder, for whom General Eisenhower had asked, became Air C.-in-C. Mediterranean, responsible to the General for all air operations in this theatre. He also had the control of all the air forces throughout the Middle East. It was decided to subdivide the Mediterranean Air Command, as it was styled later, into three main divisions, viz. : the North-West African Air Forces, composed of American, British, and eventually French units, under the American Major-General Carl Spaatz, the Middle East Command, under Air Chief Marshal Sir Sholto Douglas, and R.A.F. Malta Command, under Air Vice-Marshal Sir Keith Park. Under Air Chief Marshal Tedder, Air Vice-Marshal Coningham, who had hitherto worked with the Eighth Army, was to concert operations in support of the First and Eighth Armies on the Tunisian battlefields.

2 : BRITAIN, THE UNITED STATES AND RUSSIA

The Casablanca meeting had been of the highest value to the cause of the United Nations, but it could not be pretended that it had left no "loose ends" in Anglo-American relations to be made fast. The North African expedition had confronted the two Governments (and the American and British peoples) with several problems which they were unprepared to solve immediately. Thus the American Government had assumed that General

¹ General Quinan was subsequently transferred to the command of all the forces in western and north-western India, including the Indian frontier.

² All these quotations are from Mr. Churchill's speech of February 11.

Giraud's military prestige would enable him to raise the bulk of the French population together with the majority of the French garrisons in spontaneous revolt against Axis domination and the servile "collaboration" of Vichy. They found that much as General Giraud's military gifts were respected by his fellow-professionals he could not persuade them to break with the Pétain-Laval Government. The general public knew very little about him ; and these circumstances speedily drove the American Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies to seek for an agreement with Admiral Darlan. In this he was successful, which, from a short-term point of view, was fortunate in that he thus saved many lives and serious delays. But on the long-term view there were grave political drawbacks to this simple solution, for one its effect on British and on no inconsiderable section of American public opinion, for another the hostile reaction it produced—and was bound to produce—among the Fighting French and among multitudes of French patriots in German-occupied and Vichy France. Equally the British had been disposed to exaggerate the prestige of General Giraud and the popularity of General de Gaulle in French North Africa. They had forgotten that a large part of the population still accepted the legend that made Marshal Pétain a sort of saviour of stricken France and also that the high proportion of retired officials and officers among the North African French made it tolerably certain that these people would obey orders emanating from Vichy or from the representatives of the Vichy Government even if these orders were unpopular.

With an invasion of Europe somewhere in the offing it was therefore necessary for the two Governments to arrive at some common understanding as to their policy in the countries which it was their declared purpose to liberate, and thus to be better prepared for situations which might confront them than they had seemingly been in North Africa. Thus, to take a possible situation, supposing that the invaders of Italy found the Army and a large part of the civil population quite ready to repudiate the German alliance, to overthrow the Duce and to

offer surrender, but far from ready to liquidate the entire Fascist system, how would the American and British Governments meet this conjunction of events?

It was clearly not possible to foresee the details of the problems which awaited solution whenever the Western Allies should have made a lodgement on the Continent, but it was clearly necessary to arrive at a general understanding as to the principles which should govern their political action. Failing this political incoherence might nullify, or at least detract from, the results of military cohesion. Moreover, public opinion in Great Britain, and to some extent in the United States, had been disturbed by the agreement with Admiral Darlan. Many good and some not-so-good citizens in this country began to listen to tales of a "plot," hatched with the connivance of the State Department by plutocratic intriguers in Wall Street and their "opposite numbers" in the City to set up "safe" Right-Wing Governments in many of the countries which were to be liberated. The tale was untrue; some of those who spread it were mischief-makers; but the public could hardly be blamed for exhibiting disquiet at Admiral Darlan's appearance as an ally and for allowing a certain relief to temper their regret at his assassination.

There were other matters which required discussion and adjustment. Much United States shipping had been diverted from the Atlantic and this diversion, together with the calls of the armies in North Africa, with Russia's increasing need of food imports, and the demands of India and Australia for war material, might reduce British imports from the New World to a lower level than was safe. The problem presented by the refugees, especially the Jewish refugees who had escaped from Hitler's domain into the lands of his Balkan vassals, but were still in great danger, confronted both Governments and great pressure was being exercised on the State Department by the large Jewish population of the United States. Then there was the Russian problem. So far the Russian Government had given no clear indication of their views as to the post-war settlement of Europe. German propa-

ganda with the "Bolshevist danger" as its guiding theme might not disturb the British, but it had some effect in Spain and other neutral countries, and the enigmatic silence of the U.S.S.R. did not please either the State Department or American public opinion. Moreover, Americans who had followed Russian propaganda were hurt by its failure to acknowledge the volume of Lend-Lease supplies which the U.S.S.R. had received from the United States. This grievance was voiced by Admiral Standley, the U.S. Ambassador to Moscow, in a talk to British and U.S. journalists on March 8.

He told them that so far he had found no reference in the Russian Press to the material aid which Russia was receiving from the United States through Lend-Lease and also through the Red Cross and American-Russian Relief. He said that the American people were sending this aid through friendly feeling towards Russia, but the Russian people knew nothing about it. The Soviet authorities seemed "to be trying to create the impression that they are fighting the war alone."

The omission was promptly corrected by Moscow radio, which broadcast Mr. Stettinius' statement of March 6 on March 9.¹ On the same day Mr. Sumner Welles told the Press that the Ambassador's criticism of Russian official silence on Lend-Lease aid had been made without consultation with the Government.

This particular cause of criticism was removed, but others persisted, and the deplorable deterioration of Russo-Polish relations which became marked in March had its reactions among the 5,000,000 U.S. citizens of Polish origin and among the numerous American sympathizers with despoiled Poland. It is impossible to do more than outline the principal stages in the Russo-Polish quarrel within the bounds of this chronicle. It became public on February 25.

On that date the Polish Government in London, after discussing Russo-Polish relations passed a resolution denying that Poland had ever agreed to co-operate with Germany against Russia and affirming that Poland had always been ready to co-operate with the U.S.S.R. in the war and in maintaining friendly relations after the victory. It repudiated propaganda accusing Poland of hostility towards Russia and described reports that Poland aimed at extending her boundaries to the Black Sea and the Dnieper as absurd.

But the resolution concluded by stating that since the Russo-Polish

¹ q.v. Chapter VI, Section 1.

Treaty of July 30, 1941, Poland had maintained the attitude that, with regard to the Russo-Polish frontier, the *status quo* before September 1, 1939, was still in force, and that the Government held that any attempt to weaken that attitude (which was in conformity with the Atlantic Charter) must be prejudicial to the unity of the Allied nations.

This was quite correct, so far as it went, but it raised the question of the Eastern boundary of Poland which M. Stalin and General Sikorski had agreed to leave for settlement after the war. The Russians had ceded territory to Poland after the unsuccessful war of 1920, but they claimed that the majority of the inhabitants of the ceded lands were more akin to the Russians than to the Poles, and that they had willingly voted themselves into the Soviet Union in 1939. The first claim was justifiable, the second needed better proof than a plebiscite taken under Russian military occupation and accompanied by extensive deportations. On March 1 the Soviet News Agency, in reply to the Polish Government's statement, accused them

of refusing to recognize the "historic rights of the Ukrainians and White Russians to be united within their national states," and of advocating the partition of their lands. Even Lord Curzon, "in spite of his hostile attitude towards the U.S.S.R.," had realized that the Poles could not justly claim these regions, as the "Curzon line" testified. Unhappily the Soviet News Agency went further and refused to accept the Polish denial of having ever agreed to co-operate with Germany against Russia, averring that the "pro-Fascist" attitude of Colonel Beck's Government was notorious. It declared that Polish "ruling circles" were trying to break the unity of the Slav front, which was true of some but not by any means of all members of those classes, and it went on to accuse the exiled Polish Government of failing to reflect the genuine opinion of the Polish people.

After this first clash the relations of the two allies grew rapidly worse. The effect of an able and conciliatory speech by General Sikorski at an Inter-Allied Friendships Committee dinner in London on March 2, in which he emphasized Poland's refusal to listen to Hitler's proposals for a joint attack on Russia and drew attention to the insidious attempts of the Nazi propagandists to form "an anti-Bolshevist *bloc*," was spoiled by the publication of an official reply on March 4 to the Russian declaration. In this the Government stood on their legal rights to Eastern Poland and denied, with every appearance of justice, the right of the Russian Government to convert

Polish citizens of the territories which Russia had occupied in 1939 into Russian subjects or to deprive them of their title to relief organized by the Polish Government with British and American help. But the Poles seemed to stand on less secure ground when they insisted that the Curzon line was merely an "armistice line," and their friends wondered whether on this as on other occasions they would not have been better advised to keep silent. But there were elements in the Polish Government which seemed hostile to any sort of concession to Russia. There were elements outside it which were still more irresponsible; and one or two clandestinely printed Polish newspapers in this country attacked the U.S.S.R. with a violence which the British Government, anxious to avoid exciting Russian suspicions, found most embarrassing, and which the Russians pounced upon as "proofs" of Polish ill-will. It must be admitted that the controlled Soviet Press replied with equally venomous inaccuracy to these Polish exaggerations.

In America where comment was much less restrained than in Great Britain there was a marked tendency to take the Polish side. A large fraction of American opinion distrusted the Soviet Government, and this distrust was by no means confined to the possessing classes, and was as strong in the ranks of the American Federation of Labour as in Wall Street. Roman Catholic opinion—and Rome had more adherents in the U.S. than any other Christian Church—was as anti-Communist as it was anti-Nazi. In these circumstances it was, perhaps, inevitable that an authoritative statement issued on March 1 from the Soviet Embassy had surprisingly little effect.

The Red Army, the statement said, did not aim at the seizure of foreign countries or the subjugation of other peoples, whether in Europe or Asia, including Iran (Persia). Its first objective was the liberation of Soviet territory from the "German Fascist" yoke, and they had no intention of imposing their *régime* on Slav or other enslaved European nations who expected their help. They intended to help these nations to free themselves and then to leave them to organize their own lives in their own lands as they wished. "There must be no interference whatever in the internal affairs of other nations."¹

¹ Yet at the time of the occupation of the Baltic States by Russian troops in 1939 a member of the Soviet Embassy assured the writer that

A further shock to American opinion was administered by the execution in Russia of two Polish Socialists, Henryk Ehrlich and Victor Alter, well-known members of the Jewish Bund and of the Second International, in circumstances which were bound to excite suspicion and to strengthen existing prejudices. These men were arrested by the Russians when they invaded Poland in September, 1939. After nearly two years' imprisonment they were tried for "subversive activities," whatever these may have been, and condemned to death.

Two weeks later the sentences were commuted to ten years' penal servitude. After the conclusion of the Russo-Polish Treaty the two were released, Ehrlich on September 12, Alter on the following day. They then concerned themselves with the organization of a Jewish Committee to fight Nazism. In December, 1941, they were again arrested. According to a letter which M. Litvinov, the Russian Ambassador in Washington, sent—on the instructions of M. Molotov—to Mr. William Green, president of the American Federation of Labour, they were re-arrested because "they resumed their hostile activities, including appeals to Soviet troops to stop the bloodshed and immediately conclude a peace with Germany." They were tried by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court, condemned and executed. Many American Labour men found it hard to believe that two such well-known Socialists could have adopted such an incomprehensibly pro-German and defeatist attitude.¹

As allies of Russia the British Government were naturally exposed to criticism on the part of anti-Russian elements, especially sections of the Irish. The State there could be no question of a non-Communist system being permitted to survive there. The former activities of Russian-controlled Communist parties in the U.S., Great Britain and other democratic countries may have made Americans sceptical of Russian non-interference, and such suspicions were inevitable while the Comintern was still in being with its headquarters in Moscow.

¹ Many other Polish Socialists, Jews and non-Jews, were killed or imprisoned by the Russians in 1939-41. Their names were given at a meeting held at Caxton Hall on March 28 at which Mr. George Dallas of the British Labour Party was in the chair. The occasion was marked by a remarkable speech by that great Socialist veteran, M. Camille Huysmans, President of the Labour and Socialist International, who laid the facts before his audience and said: "If we protest we shall be accused in certain quarters of trying to disrupt the Allied Front, and of ignoring the great part played by the Russian Army in our common fight for liberation. If we do not protest, we must regard ourselves as cowards and traitors to our friends' memory. We accept . . . this dreadful dilemma. . . . We are not cowards. . . . We refuse to be silent when our Allies commit such errors and such crimes. . . . The working class of the Western countries will not abandon their principles neither under the pressure of Hitlerism nor under the pressure of men who claim to be better Socialists than they are."

Department and, indeed, official America in general, took no such sour view of the U.S.S.R., but they welcomed information about the Russian outlook and they wished to exchange opinions on present and future relations between the English-speaking Powers and the Soviet Union with British statesmen. At the same time there was no foundation whatever for stories that seem to have found some credence in the United States that the British Government wished to act as a sort of mediator between U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. No such action was desired by either, nor was it necessary.

There were other matters, too, on which frank and free discussion between British and American statesmen promised to be more than useful. Isolationism was no longer a present danger, but it might become one when peace was less distant, and there were divergences of outlook between British and Americans which Isolationists might exploit and which the Germans certainly would exploit if they persisted. The majority of Americans for a variety of reasons, notably the national admiration for China and the furious anti-Japanese passion kindled by Pearl Harbour, were more interested in the war against Japan than in the speedy overthrow of Germany. Some, too, still regarded the British Empire with suspicion, and Lord Halifax referred in an article in *The American* (March 4)

to suggestions that Americans should refuse to defend "British Imperialism," and observed that the Germans were conducting a war of whispers in order to divide the Grand Alliance. "Freedom," he wrote, "has been and is the foundation-stone of the British Commonwealth, and it is freedom for all that we are fighting to preserve. Nothing would please the enemy more than the disruption of the British Commonwealth."

Another subject which might lead later to Anglo-American differences was the future of civil aviation. It was certain that there would be a world-wide demand for frequent, safe and speedy air services, but as the aeronautical correspondent of *The Times* pointed out (*loc. cit.* February 8), national and international methods

"of dealing with civil aviation will clearly have to be on broader and more enlightened lines than before the war. Up to 1939 each country claimed ownership of the sky over its territory and refused access to the aircraft of

another nation except on condition of reciprocal treatment." Civil aviation conducted with an eye to political and prestige values was unsatisfactory because it was "less a means of transport for passengers and merchandise than a national weapon."

The subject was much discussed in the United States and some speeches and statements suggested that the Lend-Lease help which the United States was giving to other nations should be used as a bargaining counter to obtain among other advantages permanent possession of air bases constructed by Americans on foreign territory or at least to use them as a lever to obtain important concessions. This attitude and attitudes of the same type led Vice-President Wallace to speak his mind at a meeting at Columbus, Ohio, on March 9 :

"Propaganda for new, subtle, and therefore dangerous forms of isolationism," he said, would lead, were it successful, straight to a third world-war. A movement was already under way to abandon the tariff policy represented by reciprocal trade agreements and to return to the Smoot-Hawley days of building a high tariff wall round the United States. This sort of policy led, first to totalitarian control of trade, and then to war. "To win the peace, we must follow through to establish the right kind of international trade relations." Speakers were urging that after the war U.S. aviators should be permitted to fly everywhere, but that no foreign planes should be allowed to fly over the United States. "This astonishing idea seems to be first cousin to the fallacy that we can sell our goods everywhere in the world at the same time that we keep foreigners from selling to us." If they yielded to an American "imperialism" based on American supremacy over sea and air, they would make the third world-war inevitable. Questions such as the defeat of the isolationist or exclusively nationalist spirit must be faced now, and on the choice made by America would depend the fate of the next ten years, perhaps the fate of the next century.

Already Mr. Berle, the Assistant Secretary of State and a member of the Government's special committee on civil aviation, had given his views on the use of American-built air bases as a bargaining counter. Speaking before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives on February 15, both for the State Department (the U.S. Foreign Office) and for the special committee, he said that civil aviation would be an extremely important factor in post-war life.

For that reason the Allied Governments and particularly the British hoped that agreements would be reached in due course on a fair and equitable basis recognizing respective national interests. But to suggest that the United States should not actively prosecute the war save for an acknowledgment of its rights in airfields developed abroad out of Lend-

Lease funds was eminently undesirable. Wars were not won that way. "Access to those fields through the air over countries of our Allies necessarily involves the discussion of the larger question of the extent to which we are prepared to afford access to landing-fields in our own countries."

The time was ripe for further consultation between the British and American Governments. It was therefore with genuine satisfaction that thoughtful Americans heard or read the following statement which was issued in Washington on March 12 :—

"Mr. Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, has arrived in Washington on the invitation of the United States Government. The purpose of his visit is to undertake a general exchange of views with the United States Government on all aspects of the war situation, and to discuss the most effective method of preparing for meetings between the Governments of all the United Nations to consider questions arising out of the war. Mr. Eden will also wish to see at first hand something of the great war effort of the United States."

On the same day the correspondent of *The Times* at Washington telegraphed¹ that the discussions with other members of the United Nations of which Mr. Sumner Welles had spoken on February 28, were about to open at Washington. They would be discussions, not negotiations, but they would not be the less important for that. When Mr. Welles referred to the correction of "such divergencies as may be apparent" he was speaking not of plans for a post-war settlement, but of the actual working of the Grand Alliance. The solving of Allied difficulties as they arose would be

"of immense importance in determining the post-war action of the American people. Many and admirable speeches have been made since this country entered the war which some may interpret as committing the United States to inclusion in a permanent international system; the Opposition is silent, because for the time being it dare not speak lest it be accused of impeding the war effort. But to conclude from this that American public opinion has taken any final form would be dangerous. . . . The habit of action in concert with others will not suffice if that action takes place in an atmosphere vexed by recurrent disputes. This nation will emerge from this war as powerful as any that has ever been in recorded history, but there is no man alive who can tell what the American people will consent to do with that power."

After referring to some of the plans offering "an alternative to a permanent membership in some more

¹ *The Times*, March 13.

integrated political system than has yet been known" which had no great national following, Sir Wilmot Lewis observed that the "common man" remembered 1917 and its unhappy sequel too well and feared that the nations now associated in the war might again fly apart. Consequently

"The American of to-day . . . considers his allies and particularly Great Britain and Russia, with hand up to guard, as it were. He is willing . . . to admit that the issues of this struggle are as clear as those of a quarter of a century ago never were, but his doubts are reborn with every story in the newspapers which tells of some division of opinion or crossing of purpose.

It is this which makes the discussion about to begin so important where this country is concerned. Obviously this is true in a larger sense than the purely American. Mr. Welles . . . has written that there is still to be the 'acid test' of American intentions, and it is hoped that the present Congress will apply it. But it is hard to see how anything will emerge, until the election of 1944, definite enough to satisfy the doubts of foreign powers. . . ."

Mr. Eden's visit opened auspiciously. He began his first full day at Washington with a Press Conference at the British Embassy (March 13), at which he spoke of the necessity of co-operation between the Allies, now and after the war.

For the next fortnight he was engaged in a series of conversations and conferences. He saw the President, the Vice-President, and Mr. Cordell Hull, Mr. Welles, the Russian and Chinese Ambassadors, and many other important personages. He was entertained in the Capitol by the Senate and House Foreign Affairs Committees, whom he told that he favoured

"the establishment of an international body by the United Nations to preserve peace and to prevent aggression. I favour military and naval sanctions to enforce the directives of such a body. I favour a declaration by the Senate of such an intention and I favour the co-operation of the U.S.A. with all nations in solving problems growing out of the war which affect the peace of the world or the sovereignty of free peoples."

On March 19 he went to New York to confer with Mayor La Guardia, and on March 26 he addressed the Legislature of Maryland. Among the chief points in his speech were these :

We had learned from the period between the wars that "we cannot shut our windows and be careless of what is happening next door or on the other side of the street . . . we shall never find security or progress within heavily

defended national fortresses, we shall only find them in the greatest measure of co-operation." The gangster Powers must be disarmed by force and never again must the civilized world tolerate the unilateral infraction of treaties.

He had encouraging words to say of China. Of the Far Eastern war he said: "We shall not rest upon our arms until every one of our enemies has unconditionally surrendered. We no less than you and your partner China have a score to settle with Japan. Nor shall we cease fighting until that evil growth . . . has been cut back. We shall be with you on this to the end."

Security and peace could have no frontiers. The people of Great Britain were alive to the fact that they were living in one world with their neighbours, and that only within an international system with sufficient force could the individual call his soul his own. The British believed that the lack of such a system had twice brought war. "This, at least is certain, if we do not find the common ground on which to build this time, we shall not have deserved victory. . . ."

On March 30 Mr. Eden left for Ottawa after a conference with President Roosevelt, who told the Press later that so far in all the conferences that had been held between the United Nations

"They were about 95 per cent together," and that every additional conversation eliminated a few from the remaining 5 per cent. He hoped that discussions with the Russian Government would continue in the near future as with other members of the United Nations. His talks with Mr. Eden had revealed close similarity of outlook on the part of the two Governments. The conversations with the representatives had been exploratory. Final decisions could not be reached now, but "you can do a lot by a gentleman's agreement and we have thirty-one people who are gentlemen of this kind."

The President's talks with Mr. Eden had evidently been fruitful.

CHAPTER II

AFRICA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

I : THE EIGHTH ARMY

The author in the last volume of this chronicle left the Eighth Army approaching the German positions on the Wadi Bei el-Kebir, forty miles west of Sirte, hoping to give battle on New Year's day. Once again, however, Rommel drew off and began to dig in on the line of the Wadi Zem-Zem where our advanced patrols kept him under observation. As soon as sufficient stores and munitions had reached the front General Montgomery made his next spring. Early on January 15 he attacked and the enemy's defences along the Wadi, one of the many deep channels which carried occasional flood-water to the sea, were speedily reduced. A few prisoners were taken, but the Axis troops did not stand, and by January 16 our troops held a line running roughly north-east to south-west fifty miles from Misurata. By the following night our troops had halved that distance, and on January 18 the Army, strongly supported by the R.A.F. and by U.S. and South African squadrons, had passed through Misurata and reached Garibaldi beyond it. The constant raiding of the roads by our bombers and fighters, coupled with heavy bombings of Castel Benito aerodrome—where U.S. aircraft shot down fourteen Axis aircraft and claimed a score destroyed on the ground—helped to minimize Rommel's capacity to fight a serious delaying action and of his air force to succour his retreating troops.

Meanwhile a French column, commanded by an enterprising General who went by the name of "Leclerc," had come into the picture on the left of the Eighth Army. Composed of light armoured cars, light motor transport and camelry, this force had left Fort Lamy in French

Equatorial Africa in mid-December. Moving with astonishing rapidity, it crossed the Sahara to reach Oum (Umm) el-Aranib,¹ an Italian post east of Murzuk in Fezzan, and captured its garrison without much resistance, though the 400 Italians there could have given the lightly armed Fighting French a deal of trouble. Two days later Leclerc's men took the posts of Brach and Gatrún, and his armoured cars supported by aircraft shot up the important Sebha aerodrome. On January 11 they took Sebha and Murzuk itself with their Italian garrisons. Another Fighting French column operating to the left of Leclerc's main body captured Tashiunet near the Tunisian frontier. On January 14 adventurous patrols of the expedition established touch with French troops in south-west Tunisia. They had covered more than 1,500 miles in less than a month.

Leclerc's operations protected the left flank and communications of the Eighth Army against any enterprise which the Italian "Saharan Group" might have attempted. With a force probably not exceeding 2,000 men, he had inflicted about 1,000 casualties on the Italians (including prisoners) and compelled their Commander, General Mannerini, to beat a rapid retreat before "overwhelming" forces.² Meanwhile the Eighth Army pressed on and its left wing engaged hostile flanking forces at Tarhuna on January 19. On January 20 Tarhuna and the town of Homs were occupied and Rommel's rearguards drew off to cover the southern and eastern approaches to Tripoli, capital of Italian North Africa and the last Italian stronghold there. They were unable to do more than fight a delaying action among the sand-dunes, palm groves and gardens that surrounded the city, although, to do Rommel justice, that was all he intended to do. Strongly supported by aircraft, the vanguard of the Desert Army advanced from Tarhuna and Homs, pushing back the stubborn rearguards of the 90th German (Light) Division through the defiles between

¹ *Anglice* "Mother of Hares," a name which the Arabic-speaking French colonial soldiers may have found *à propos*.

² Italian *communiqué* of January 7.

Tarhuna and Tripoli and in a last fight at Castel Benito on the evening of January 22. At dawn next day the Army entered Tripoli. At noon General Montgomery made his formal entry into the city and received its formal surrender and that of the province of Tripolitania from General di San Marco, Vice-Governor of Libya, the Prefect of the Province and the Mayor.

Many air-raids and vigorous sabotage of the port installations and buildings had left the city battered and unkempt. Probably 20,000 of its 60,000 Italians had left. Most of the remainder stayed indoors while Arabs and Jews gave our men a warm welcome. Brigadier M. S. Lush was appointed to administer the city and territory. The policy of the Eighth Army Command was simple. Fascist leaders and prominent members of the Fascist Party were interned. Fascist clubs and cultural centres were closed. The teaching of Fascist ideas in the schools, the display of Fascist flags and insignia and the wearing of Fascist uniforms was forbidden. The inhabitants, especially the cultivators, were encouraged to follow their avocations. The Italian lira remained in circulation. The British military authorities fixed exchange at the severe rate of 480 lire to the pound. There were no disturbances.

The fall of Tripoli caused deep despondency in Italy, great rejoicing among all the Allied belligerents and deep satisfaction among the Egyptians, and still more among the Turks from whom the Italians had seized the city in 1911. It marked the climax of an astonishing campaign. In three months starting with the opening of the Battle of Egypt at el-Alamein on October 23 the Eighth Army had advanced through 1,350 miles mostly of foodless and waterless desert, had inflicted a loss of fully 80,000 men killed, captured or disabled upon the Italo-German forces, had taken or destroyed more than 500 tanks, 1,000 guns, many thousands of lorries and over 1,600 aircraft. The advance had been an astonishing example of organization and high and deserved praise was given to General Lindsell, Quartermaster-General of the Eighth Army, for the manner in which he had supplied

and munitioned our troops. Broadcasting on January 23, Sir James Grigg said :

"Our men had to carry everything, including water and petrol. What that implied was shown by the fact that during one week, in a late stage of the advance, over 3,000,000 gallons of petrol were delivered at the front and over 8,000 tons of ammunition.

It was an unparalleled feat of military organization that has flung so great a force at such speed so far across an inhospitable desert. To the Quartermaster-General's Staff under General Lindsell must go much of the credit of this phenomenal march ; and to those often unnamed services, the Royal Engineers, the Royal Army Service Corps, the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, a full measure of praise is due, as well as to the Royal Army Medical Corps and other ancillary services. This was a joint operation to which every branch of the Army and of the sister services made its due contribution. Primarily an Army exploit, it would have been impossible if the Air Force had not secured, and maintained, complete mastery of the air."

The last tribute was particularly well deserved, for the R.A.F., with the South African and United States units co-operating with it, had played a remarkable part in the last stages of the advance. Only on January 23 did the Allied air forces reduce their pressure on the enemy's retreating motorized columns after seventy-two hours of intensive attack. The Navy had co-operated magnificently with the advancing Army to Tobruk and had been remarkably successful in clearing the damaged or sunken hulls which filled the harbour at Benghazi. But it could not give extensive assistance to the Army between Mersa Brega and Tripoli since the enemy had destroyed the small jetties at the various landing places usable by small craft along the coast. Yet although two blockships had been sunk at the mouth of the port of Tripoli, though the breakwater had been breached and the Spanish Mole had been demolished down to water level for fifty feet by our bombs, though the enemy had destroyed everything that might be of service to the Eighth Army, the Navy with assistance from the Royal Engineers had made it possible for our supply ships to enter Tripoli harbour within a week after its capture. Once more the British had shown their ability to "make do" in the face of difficulties which might have daunted any soldiers and sailors, even their eminently efficient German enemies.

After a short halt at Tripoli the Eighth Army advanced towards the Tunisian border. General Leclerc's force out on their left continued to "mop up" Italian detachments which might otherwise have had some nuisance value to Rommel though they were too small to exercise any important influence on the campaign. Between January 22 and the end of the month they occupied Serdeles, el Barca and Misda, 100 miles south of Tripoli, isolated a small Italian garrison at Ghat and reached Ghadames at the south-west corner of Tripolitania on January 28. Two days earlier their armoured cars had linked up with General Montgomery's army at Tripoli. Meanwhile, the vanguard of the Eighth Army had fought a small engagement with the retreating Axis troops at Zuara, and were advancing, strongly supported from the air. On February 2 they entered Zelten, and on that day General Leclerc's desert troops made contact with General Giraud's outposts at Ghadames. By February 8 the last Axis troops had crossed the Tunisian border followed by our armoured troops, and that evening these fought their first engagement on Tunisian soil.

During the following week Rommel withdrew gradually to the Mareth Line. This chain of fortified positions was constructed by the French before the outbreak of war as a retort to the increasingly pro-German attitude of Italy. It extended from the coast, some eighteen miles south of Gabes, through the village of Mareth to the Matmata Hills, a distance of some 40 miles.¹ Although it had been disarmed after the Armistice of June, 1940, and some of its strong-points had been dismantled, it remained a formidable obstacle, and German and Italian troops had been restoring it and preparing fresh concrete pill-boxes and gun-emplacements since January. The rough hilly country on its western or desert flank opposed great difficulties to an advance. The southern approaches are protected by a line of salt marshes running inland almost at right angles from the coast, and immediately in front of the eastern section of the line runs the Wadi Zigzaou, a watercourse with steep banks, dry in summer

¹ The "crow-fly" distance is about 30 miles.

but carrying a sluggish stream with a bed of soft mud in spring and winter. Fortunately the line had been constructed before the combination of armour and aircraft against fortified positions had been devised outside Germany, and it was consequently less formidable than it might have been.

On February 13 our troops were skirmishing with Rommel's rearguards near Ben Gardane and they entered this village two days later. At this period bad weather with heavy rainstorms and thick cloud handicapped our advance and restricted the activities of the Desert Air Force. The nearest of its aerodromes were on clay, while those of the Axis were on sandier soil and recovered more rapidly after rain. The enemy took advantage of the delay to lay more mines, of which his troops in North Africa seemed to have inexhaustible supplies. Nevertheless the Eighth Army pushed forward taking Fom Tatahouine on February 18 and Medenine on the 20th. As he advanced General Montgomery occupied the southern spurs of the Matmata Hills which lay on his left flank and sent the French round to Kasr Rhilan (Ghilan) to cover his left against a thrust by the enemy's right. With an improvement in the weather our air activity increased. Although something like a fifth of the *Luftwaffe* was now concentrated in Tunisia, Sicily, Sardinia and the extreme south of Italy, the Allies more than held their own. The Desert Air Force made numerous attacks on Rommel's communications and on his ports; Gabes and Sfax, in southern Tunisia, working in close combination with the Allied Air Force in the north, and with the improvement in the weather and the arrival of reinforcements they won a marked ascendancy over the Germans and Italians. They were also able to beat off night attacks on Tripoli and Benghazi¹ with loss and to make numerous successful reconnaissances over the Axis positions in southern Tunisia. Greatly assisted by their co-operation, the Eighth Army closed gradually on the Mareth Line. By the end of the month it was within striking distance of the line and its patrols were probing

¹ q.v. section 3 of this Chapter.

the enemy's front from west of the Matmata Hills (also known as the Jebel Ksour) to the sea. The next blow, however, came from Rommel. After his partial success on the Kairouan-Gafsa front, described in the next section of this chapter, he attempted to make use of his interior lines to strike a damaging blow at the Eighth Army.

On March 6 Rommel attacked. His first thrust with infantry and tanks was directed against our left about six miles north-west of Matameur with the object of capturing some high ground fronting the right of the Mareth Line. An hour later armoured troops delivered a frontal attack from the Mareth Line. There was no question of surprise and the enemy lost twenty-one tanks in these first attacks. Two thrusts by infantry during the afternoon effected temporary lodgements in our positions, but the position was quickly restored by counter-attacks and the intruders were ousted. A final attack in which about thirty tanks were engaged some five miles west of Medenine was pinned down by our artillery fire. On Sunday the enemy retreated. He was roughly handled by our aircraft while retiring through the defiles in the hills. On March 9 A.H.Q. announced his continued withdrawal into the high ground near Hallouf.

"The total of enemy tanks definitely in our hands after the battle on Saturday is now 50. This high number is made up of three Mark IIs, 2 Mark IIIs, 8 new-type Mark IIIs with 75-mm. guns, 19 Mark III specials and 18 Mark IV specials. . . . On the Eighth Army front fighter-bombers and fighters of Western Desert Air Forces continued their attacks on retreating enemy tanks and motor transport inflicting considerable damage."

Rommel's losses in men were also believed to have been heavy. He had suffered a sharp repulse and had inflicted no counter-balancing losses of men and material on the Eighth Army, which was understood to have had less than 250 casualties and to have lost no tanks. But from his flanking position in the hills near Hallouf he continued to threaten the left flank of any direct advance on the Mareth Line, which in the opinion of the Military Correspondent of *The Times*,¹ would have to be covered by a

¹ *loc. cit.* March 10.

flank-guard "virtually as strong as" the attacking force, if the attack was to have any hope of success.

It was, however, possible to threaten the rearward communications of the force in the Hallouf hills from the desert in the west, and it was a threat of this kind that brought about the next action in southern Tunisia. On March 10 Rommel's armoured cars and motorized infantry and artillery attacked General Leclerc's Fighting French near Ksar Ghilan, a road junction some fifty miles west-south-west of Medenine. About thirty armoured cars went into action and dive-bombers attempted to support them. The French, however, resisted stoutly, and Allied fighters and fighter-bombers quickly intervened and broke two attempted attacks by the dive-bombers, and also made numerous attacks on the enemy's vehicles. Another German attack on March 13 broke down and next day Rommel had retired to his original positions which our aircraft bombed heavily for the next three days. If it had been his intention to interfere with our dispositions for attack on the Mareth Line he had failed.

On March 20 after dark, General Montgomery attacked the coastal flank of the Mareth Line under cover of a heavy bombardment. The positions which his troops attacked were a chain of strongholds from Zarat on the coast to about six miles inland, five in the front line and two in support. After the Royal Engineers had cleared paths through the minefields with their accustomed devotion elements of the 50th Division attacked under heavy fire. They crossed the Wadi Zigzaou, scaled its steep northern bank with ladders, and by dawn had captured three links in the chain of strong-points. Behind them infantry and engineers toiled under heavy fire at a causeway of brushwood and timber to carry tanks and guns over the stream. By midday on Monday, March 22, 1,700 prisoners had been taken, and early that afternoon a first counter-stroke was repulsed. Axis communications and concentrations were heavily bombed by the Desert Air Force and a strong force of fighters carrying cannon-guns

"attacked a concentration of enemy tanks and armoured cars west of el-Hamma. Thirty-two tanks were hit, at least nine of them being

destroyed ; light bombers attacked enemy positions south of Zarat. . . . The enemy airfield at Mezzouna [ten miles east of Maknassi] was attacked by formations of light and medium bombers, fires being started among aircraft on the ground. In the course of these raids and of offensive patrols by our fighters, nine enemy aircraft were destroyed. . . ."

But Rommel was not beaten yet. While our troops endeavoured to extend their bridgehead Rommel called in part of his armour from el-Hamma and attacked again. The black mud at the bottom of Wadi Zigzaou began to swallow the causeway like a quicksand. It had carried troops and light guns, but it could not support tanks and the heavier guns reinforcing the bridgehead. By nightfall on March 22 the Germans had recaptured all but one of the five strongholds which were in our hands at noon. To reinforce the bridgehead under heavy fire was to incur further heavy loss with no certainty of success, for our tanks could not cross the disappearing causeway. After nightfall the remainder of the troops who had crossed Wadi Zigzaou were withdrawn covered by a heavy barrage. On March 24 Mr. Churchill told the House of Commons that the battle had by no means reached its climax and much hard fighting still awaited the British and U.S. forces.

"The latest information from the Mareth front . . . shows that the Germans, by counter-attacks, have regained the greater part of the bridgehead which had been stormed, and that their main line in that quarter is largely restored. I take occasion to make this statement, as I do not wish that hopes of an easy decision should be encouraged. On the other hand, I have good confidence in the final result."

The attack on the eastern flank of the Axis positions was only half the battle. On March 19, General Freyberg, the commander of a British force which had moved out from Foum Tatahouine to hold the German and Italian troops in front of el-Hamma, believed that he had been detected by the enemy, though he had marched by night and hidden by day. Accordingly,

"he marched all the day of March 20 and attacked that night, driving a wedge into the enemy defences and opening a path through the mine-field. During the next days he won vantage points to the left and then to the right." His preliminary success prepared the way for the decision "to switch the Eighth Army's attack to come from the west, thus exploiting and reinforcing the desert thrust so successfully begun as a threat to

Rommel's right (and southern) flank." The Mareth forces were to fight a holding battle to encourage the enemy to believe that the struggle on the Wadi Zigzaou would be renewed. When this decision was taken the desert column was holding "a line across the gap between the Jebel Melab, running due east and west, 15 to 20 miles south of el-Hamma, and the Jebel¹ Tebaga, which is to the west, running from south-west to north-east. The mountains formed a letter T lying on its left side, with the two strokes not quite meeting" (I—). A road traversed the gap to el-Hamma and across the low saddleback joining one mountain *massif* to another were the ruins of a Roman wall built to protect the rich Gabes region from Libyan raiders. The Germans expected attack here. "They dug themselves in, sent some of their best troops and the best of their allies, and laid a minefield across the road. They also held vantage points on either side."²

The decision having been taken, a powerful armoured force, including the 1st Armoured Division and lorried infantry went forward to support General Freyberg's mobile and powerful New Zealand Army Corps.

Grouped with it, General Freyberg reported to the New Zealand Government³ were the 8th British Armoured Brigade, the 3rd Royal Tank Regiment, the Staffordshire and Nottinghamshire Yeomanry regiments, the Buffs, the King's Dragoon Guards and British medium, field and anti-tank artillery regiments. There were also Fighting French units and a detachment of the Greek Army.

Between this force and the troops attacking or observing the Mareth Line two Indian brigades pressed into the Matmata hill complex to protect General Freyberg's flank.

While the New Zealand Army Corps bit its way into the enemy's positions, encountering obstinate resistance from Germans and in particular from an Italian force holding a hill to the south of the gap, our reinforcements were swung across to the west at top speed. Through the night of March 24 our armoured and unarmoured vehicles streamed from Medenine along the thirty miles of metalled road to Fom Tatahouine. There they left the road and plunged into the sandy desert. That day the *khamzin*, the hot Saharan wind, began to blow, but the clouds of dust that it carried helped to screen our advance from hostile aircraft. Before dawn on March 26 the reinforcing tanks and lorried infantry were taking up their positions as they arrived before the gap. Still before first light the British commander withdrew his

¹ Jebel means "mountain, mountain-range."

² From an admirable description of the battle sent by the special correspondent of *The Times* from before el-Hamma and published March 31.

³ Wellington message of April 13 (Reuter).

squadrons of Kittyhawks continuously over the Axis lines. At 4 p.m. our artillery opened fire, and a great mass of tanks came rolling into action, followed by newly arrived troops from the reserve. One attempt by German aircraft to intervene met a storm of fire from our infantry and turned away. Just out of range our armour awaited the order to attack. At moonrise the armoured reinforcements drove through the Axis centre to el-Hamma, while the infantry following on first stormed the Roman wall and then carried the Axis gun positions two miles in rear. Many of the hostile infantry were trapped. Throughout March 26 the Germans fought desperately, but the Italian resistance broke down. Next morning the whole of the Mareth position was being abandoned, Mareth, Toujane and Matmata were in our hands and the Indian troops had forced the Hallouf Pass and other defiles in the Matmata hills and had linked up with the New Zealand Army Corps, while the 51st (Highland) Division had gone into action. Rommel could not risk resistance on the narrow neck between the Fejej marsh and the sea known as the Gabes Gap. He had lost over forty tanks to the New Zealand Army Corps, the resistance of the 50th Division to his 15th Panzer Division had cost him dear, 8,000 of his men were prisoners, and on his right rear the Americans from Gafsa were attacking eastward from el-Guettar. On March 29 we occupied el-Hamma and Gabes, next day our advanced detachments had taken Oudref, in spite of a stiff resistance by Axis rearguards, and on March 31 our patrols were in contact with his prepared positions on the Wadi Akarit. Once more Rommel had got the bulk of his army away in time, but he had suffered heavy loss, and the skill with which he had conducted his retreat could not disguise the fact that he had been outmanœuvred.

2 : THE TUNISIAN CAMPAIGN

Our offensive in Tunisia made slow progress until March. The difficulties of the Allies arose from several causes. The ground was unfavourable to any rapid

advance once the Germans had built up a fairly considerable strength in tanks, artillery (especially mortars) and aircraft in the region between Bizerta and Sfax. Their troops and some of their Italian allies were hardy and well-trained ; they had abundant battle experience, for a number of their men had fought in Russia ; their heavy field mortar was a formidable and accurate weapon ; their tanks and aircraft were well handled, and during a great part of the quarter under review the superior quality of the British and U.S. air squadrons and their greater numerical strength were in some degree neutralized by the handicaps described in the previous volume of this series. Even though we might have, say, 200 aircraft, fighters, light bombers and army co-operation machines, operating on a given sector of the front against 120 German aircraft of similar categories, and even though the average quality of our pilots might be definitely superior to that of the Axis personnel, it did not follow that we could always turn this superiority to account. If bad weather on the Atlas made our advanced landing-grounds into dangerous swamps, if our best airfields were so far in rear that our fighter pilots coming from them to carry out their task of defence and support could only spend a third as much time over the battle front as the Germans spent in fulfilling like duties, our superiority did not exist in fact. Indeed, the Axis pilots might have claimed air superiority on the ground that they were often able to make far more offensive or defensive sorties daily than our larger forces. Fortunately on almost all occasions when fighters encountered fighters the superior training of our pilots gave them a higher average of successes, and the enemy found raiding the Algerian ports nearer the better equipped Allied air bases a costly adventure.

Other causes of delay were the inferiority of our land communications which had suffered from two years' neglect and their greater length. The crow-fly distance from Algiers to the frontier of Tunisia is approximately 300 miles, and even when we made Bône into an advanced base it was eighty miles from the then front. The Ger-

mans, holding the relatively dry Tunisian plains with a network of roads and railways favouring rapid movement, were able also to get possession of the ends of the parallel ranges forming the eastern extremity of the Atlas range and extend their holding westward, in spite of the skilful and gallant efforts of the two brigades and a valiant parachute battalion which alone opposed their superior numbers.¹ As our troops were reinforced and we extended our front southward, the enemy followed suit. In spite of the fraying of his life-line to southern Italy and Sicily he received considerable reinforcements by sea and air, and at need von Arnim, who commanded in northern Tunisia, could count on support from Rommel who disposed of some 60,000 men from the remains of his Afrika Korps and the Italians on his line of communication, and received strong drafts early in the year.²

Apart from these handicaps a larger proportion of the Germans and probably of the Italians on the African front had had battle experience than the British of the First Army. The soldiers of the IInd U.S. Army Corps attached to that army had, broadly speaking, no such experience at all, and battle teaches more than the most realistic battle practice. The French forces contained a goodly leaven of professional soldiers, many of whom had fought in France, but they were sadly under-armed, often, indeed, having nothing but rifles and a few field-guns to oppose to a terrific array of tanks, mortars and automatic weapons. The Arabs of northern Tunisia gave the enemy frequent information—a number of executions of spies and traitors were announced by General Giraud's administration—and the Italian colony in Tunisia, whether naturalized or not, had joined their compatriots as soon as they appeared. Such were the

¹ Difficulties of supply and of unloading the military stores and equipment required made it impossible to get more troops to the Tunisian front in November, and the Germans, as shown in the previous volume, just won the race to Bizerta.

² The Pistoia Division and a Fascist Militia Division with various garrison and communication troops, mostly Italians, were picked up by Rommel as he retreated.

difficulties with which the Allies contended at first with difficulty but with gradually increasing success.

Early in January we attacked German positions fifteen miles west of Mateur. By January 6 the attack had failed. Then, but for skirmishes at Fondouk and Pichon where the French held their ground, ground fighting died down for nearly a fortnight. Air fighting was heavy. Raids were made by day and still more by night on military targets near Kairouan, at Gabes, Sfax, Bizerta, Tunis, Susa and Ferryville. Aircraft from the Eighth Army and Malta took part in these attacks. There were many air fights. In the first half of January we claimed ninety Axis machines destroyed flying or grounded, including those wrecked in a heavy American raid on the Castel Benito aerodrome on January 12. Our loss on the whole Mediterranean front during this period was sixty machines. On January 18 the Axis forces opened a local offensive with the object of capturing the hills overlooking the road running south-west from the important road junction of Pont du Fahs. They forced back the French troops and it was, apparently, in this fighting that two North African battalions were surrounded near Goubellat and destroyed almost to a man by German tanks, against which they had no defence. On January 20 the enemy had gained seven miles in the direction of el-Aroussa and had advanced along the Pont du Fahs-Maktar road nearly to Robaa. Farther south they pressed up the next valley, that of Ousseltia, and carried the Bou Dabous height on the east side of the valley. The fighting lasted until January 26. The Germans failed to take Robaa, but they held the pass traversed by the Ousseltia-Kairouan road. Farther south strong British and American patrols carried out raids and took prisoners in the Maknassi area between Gafsa and Sfax.

On January 30 the Axis troops attacked, this time making the Faïd Pass, about sixty miles west-north-west of Sfax their objective. They overran the under-armed French defenders and next day they gained more ground towards Sidi Bou Zid and repulsed three American

attempts to retake the Pass against a German combination of heavy artillery and dive-bombers. Other U.S. forces were held up near Maknassi. The situation was, however, temporarily stabilized by U.S. aircraft which bombed tanks and lorries moving towards the Faid Pass, doing great damage. In northern Tunisia there had been heavy air fighting since January 15. Bizerta was repeatedly bombed by the Allies, and on January 16 Allied Headquarters announced the destruction of six enemy bombers on the previous night, of seven transport aircraft and two fighters off the Tunisian coast, and of eight more fighters, seven of which came to grief attacking Allied airfields, a total of 23 against our 8. In another series of engagements on January 31, we destroyed 19 hostile aircraft, losing only 6.

On February 2 and 3 the Americans renewed their attempts to retake the Faid Pass but failed. There was fresh fighting in the mountains south-west of Pont du Fahs and on Jebel (Mount) Mansour, south-east of Bou Arada. Far to the south American forces advanced in strength towards Maknassi. Jebel Mansour was lost on February 5 and the Alliliga heights near it. A fairly quiet spell followed this engagement except in the air, where there were many encounters. On February 9 A.H.Q., after announcing

"nothing to report from our land forces on the Tunisian front," continued : "Heavy bombers raided the docks at Susa where two ships were hit and many bursts were seen on quays and on the seaplane base. Medium bombers attacked Gabes aerodrome causing fires among buildings and aircraft on the ground. This raid met strong opposition from enemy fighters, 18 of which were shot down. Five of our aircraft were lost. . . ."

On the same day Reuter's correspondent at A.H.Q., North Africa, said that Allied aircraft had destroyed 607 Axis machines for the loss of 250 of their own (87 R.A.F. and 163 U.S.A.A.F.) during the first three months of the North African campaign, a figure which did not include losses inflicted or incurred in Libya and seemed to include Axis machines allegedly destroyed on the ground, the destruction of which could not be proved save by occupation of the enemy's airfields.

Meanwhile Rommel, leaving a force to watch General Montgomery, brought back at least one of his Panzer divisions to reinforce von Arnim. A third armoured division, the 10th, had also been recognized in Tunisia.

The next three weeks saw a bold and interesting attempt, apparently conducted by Rommel himself, to use the Axis command of interior lines by striking first at the IInd American Corps on the front running from near Sidi Bou Zid towards Gafsa, and next at the Eighth Army south of the Mareth Line, which last attempt has been described in section 1 of this chapter.

On February 14 the Germans launched a heavy attack from Faïd on the American positions near Sidi Bou Zid. They threw the tanks, infantry and artillery of the 21st Panzer Division and of part of the 10th Panzer Division, together with some Italian troops, into the fight. A large number of dive-bombers supported the attack. After heavy fighting one German column captured the road junction north-east of Sidi Bou Zid, while another moving round to the north pressed south-westwards towards the Faïd-Sbeitla road. The Americans counter-attacked, but unsuccessfully, and by nightfall, after a heavy battle between the Germans and the American Armoured Division, the enemy were fifteen miles from Sbeitla. Meanwhile another strong German column had pushed westward from Sened and threatened Gafsa which the Americans evacuated during the night. Next morning the Americans counter-attacked energetically and threw the Germans back six miles south of the Faïd-Sbeitla road. On February 16, however, the Germans attacked with fifty tanks and the Americans had to withdraw. On the night of February 16-17 the enemy attacked again in the direction of Sbeitla and reached the outskirts of the town. Meanwhile the advanced French troops to the west of Kairouan had been driven out of Pichon.

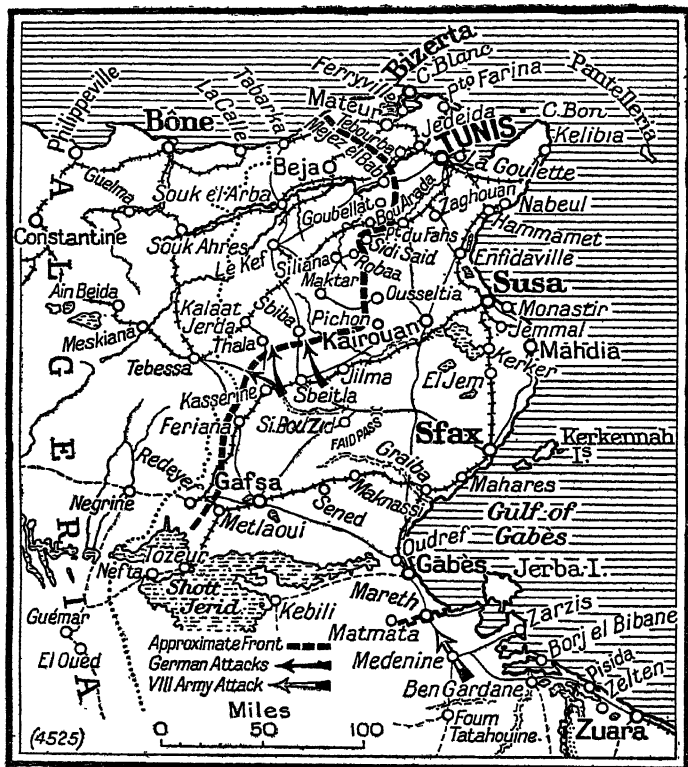
By this the losses of our Allies, especially in armour, had been heavy, owing to the local superiority which the enemy had established in motorized artillery and anti-tank guns. From the hills on each flank of the western entrance to the Faïd Pass his guns had been able to maintain a destructive fire from commanding positions on the American artillery and tanks, and the dive-bombers had inflicted important losses on the Americans'

transport. In the circumstances the Allied troops could not risk further losses and they retired on the whole front, evacuating the airfields and towns of Sbeitla, Kasserine and Feriana, towards which last point the German force from Sened, which had occupied Gafsa, was pressing hard. By this time British and American reinforcements were coming up, but the forced evacuation of some advanced landing-grounds gave the enemy a local, if temporary, advantage in the air, which was particularly valuable in this hill country where the few roads passed through defiles where motor traffic was liable to severe punishment in default of timely air cover.

On February 18 there were minor attacks. The Germans were probing the Allied position. Next day they made two fairly heavy attacks, one on the Allied positions near Sbiba, the other an attempt to force the pass north-west of Kasserine. Both attacks were held, but next day (February 20) the Germans came on again and carried the pass after a stiff fight. The French fell back in the Ouselltia Valley. The situation was serious, for if the Germans forced their way through the Tebessa range the communications of the First British Army would be seriously endangered. On February 21 the enemy attacked again. One column advanced towards Sbiba from Sbeitla. It was repulsed in an action wherein British Guard units distinguished themselves and Churchill tanks were engaged for the first time in Tunisia. But the main German effort was in the Kasserine area where Rommel launched two attacks. One in which he used forty tanks drove westwards towards Tebessa and its airfield. The Americans beat off the attack which cost the enemy ten tanks. The other drive was northwards against Thala which commanded the approaches to the First Army's lines of communication. Here the situation became grave when the enemy got within two miles of Thala, but early on February 22 the situation was reported to be in hand. The enemy had suffered fairly heavy tank losses, and by now large reserves, including British as well as American troops, were banking up behind the front and many Sherman tanks had arrived

to fill the gaps in our armour. Small attacks continued during February 22, but they made no headway. The critical stage of the battle was past.

On February 22 the German armoured columns



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which had advanced towards Tebessa and Thala began to fall back on the Kasserine Pass. They left an Italian rearguard behind them and mined the roads as they retired into the Pass. About 300 Italians were taken prisoners and the Germans retiring into and through the Pass suffered many casualties from air bombing. On the

night of February 24-25 they evacuated the Kasserine Pass under pressure from Allied infantry and tanks. During the next few days they retired to the lower ground, much harassed from the air, until on March 3 they were back on a line running roughly north and south through Sidi Bou Zid to a point a little west of Gafsa.

This concluded the Axis offensive against the southern and mainly American half of the First Army. It had been highly successful at first. Speaking at Washington on February 18, Mr. Stimson said that the American forces in Central Tunisia had suffered "a serious local setback," accompanied by "substantial casualties" to American personnel, and many tanks had been destroyed. The success of the attack, according to experienced war correspondents at the front, was mainly due to two factors. The Germans concentrated a much larger force, concealing many of their tanks most successfully until the last moment, against the American Armoured Division and the two "combat teams" (mixed formations of about the strength of a brigade group) which were strung out over a wide front to watch the approaches from the plains. Gallantly as these troops fought—one battalion which was isolated for three days within the German lines contrived to extricate itself and bring all its prisoners away—the odds against them were heavy. They were well trained but they lacked the finishing touch of battle experience by which Rommel's troops had been seasoned, and the German "Tiger" tanks, some of which were in action, were probably superior even to their Shermans. The other important factor in Rommel's success was his local air superiority. Although the Allies possessed a larger number of aircraft than the Axis both in northern and in southern Tunisia, the battle area in central Tunisia was beyond the useful range of most of the Allied fighter aircraft from either flank. The loss of airfields during the period February 14-17 was a further handicap to the Allies. The prompt arrival of reserves and the cool and skilful handling of a disagreeable situation by General Alexander, who took over his new command on February 20, prevented the enemy from exploiting his initial gains

and finally compelled his retreat. At the same time it was absurd to pretend that he had had much the worst of the exchanges. The military correspondent of *The Times* observed in this connection (*loc. cit.* February 27) :

"It is ill-advised . . . to talk of a 'resounding victory.' It does not amount to that. We do not know the extent of the Allied booty yet, but we do know that the enemy claims 4,000 prisoners, 235 tanks, and 160 guns. In any case Italian prisoners, who seem to be in the majority, cannot be considered a fair exchange for Americans or British."

Meanwhile, in order to prevent the British from sending too many reinforcements to the central front, and also to enlarge his bridgehead, von Arnim made a series of attacks on the extreme north of the Allied line. They opened on February 26 when the enemy made nine separate attacks between Cape Serrat and Ousseltia, all, save that on Cape Serrat, being made by Germans, who employed some thirty battalions and about fifty tanks. The two most important attacks were pressed along two roads, from Mateur to Beja, and from Mejez el-Bab to el-Aroussa. By the evening of February 27 the enemy, though he had broken into the Allied positions at some points, was held at most of these and had already been expelled from the rest by counter-attacks. He had lost over 800 prisoners and twelve tanks, and his casualties had been heavy. During the next few days his attacks gradually decreased in violence—except in the Sejenane area, where he pressed us hard, inflicting and sustaining heavy losses. Churchill tanks were engaged here and did good service. By March 2 the fighting had died down elsewhere in the north. French Moroccan troops were with the First Army during these operations and they fought right well.

On March 4 the enemy broke into Sejenane after several days' hard fighting in which the Hampshire Regiment again distinguished itself by a magnificent resistance against great odds at Sidi Nsir. We finally evacuated the ruined village. Next the Germans, who were making big claims in this sector—"2,110 prisoners in the week ending February 27"—took Cape Serrat (March 6), but heavy bombing of their transport and

tanks, of which they had lost forty-five since their northern offensive began, checked them, and when they attacked Tamera on March 8 they were beaten off and lost 200 prisoners. This marked the end of their northern offensive. They had dented and bent our line but they had not broken it. The magnificent resistance of the 78th Division, gradually reinforced since the beginning of the year by the rest of the 6th (Armoured) Division and the 46th (North Midland) Division, still held them.

Meanwhile the Allies had been gaining or regaining ground in central and southern Tunisia. They reoccupied Sidi Bou Zid on March 4. The French took Pichon back on the 8th, and on the same day their Saharan troops occupied Tozeur railhead on the Jerid marsh (Shott) and took Meilaoui on March 10. Their air forces which had been reinforced were growing more mobile as new airfields were completed and the balance of losses in the February offensives was definitely against the Axis. On February 27 and 28, for example, 27 Axis machines were shot down against 4 Allied aircraft, and his loss during this period was estimated at 105 machines. The Allies lost but 31. Axis airfields and harbours had been severely pounded. The Allied losses had been heavy, but they were much exaggerated by German bulletins. These gave the American losses in the battles near the Kasserine Gap at 3,000 killed and 4,000 prisoners. The U.S. Secretary for War gave the figures for February 14-20, the critical period of the battle, at 2,242, of whom 2,007 were missing.

With the repulse of Rommel's attacks on the Eighth Army on March 6-12 the Allies began to threaten his communications. On March 17 American troops entered Gafsa after some fighting and they then pressed eastwards towards Sened and south-eastwards towards el-Guettar. Strong air forces covered their advance. On March 22 they took Maknassi, overthrowing an Italian force which lost 1,400 prisoners, and Rommel, finding their advance circumscribed his zone of manoeuvre while he was being heavily attacked on the Mareth Line, sent strong forces of tanks and lorried infantry to attack them. On March 23, fifty German tanks, apparently from the 10th Panzer Division, attacked the Americans south-east of Maknassi. This attack failed as did another near Fondouk in the Pichon sector. At the same time these thrusts did fulfil their purpose in so far as they delayed the American advance and give the enemy more time to mine the approaches to his vulnerable flank, while an American attempt to force the Fondouk Pass failed through lack of concentration.

But the delay was brief. On March 28 came news of the occupation of Fondouk by American troops, a further advance of French and U.S. forces on the front east of Gafsa against stiff resistance, successful patrol encounters in the Ousseltia Valley and the opening of an offensive by General Anderson's British and French Moroccan troops on the night of March 27-28. The last attack prospered, and on March 30 British and Moroccans retook the much-disputed village of Sejenane after a hard fight in which a brigade of the 78th Division did splendidly and made over 800 prisoners, mostly Italians, while the French, who had received some modern weapons, made headway east of Pichon. At last the Axis hold on the Tunisian heights was beginning to weaken.

Its weakening was not due only to the attacks of the British, French and United States forces and to the growing pressure of the Eighth Army from the south. The persistent pounding of the enemy's transport and communications far and near by Allied air power was beginning to tell. The concentration of all air operations, tactical and strategical, in the entire region from Morocco to the Egyptian border, under Air Chief Marshal Tedder, which has been chronicled in the first chapter of this volume, was bearing good fruit. The integration of the commands of General Spaatz and Air Vice-Marshal Coningham with that of Air Vice-Marshal Broadhurst, who now commanded the Desert Air Force and received the warm thanks of General Montgomery for the "superb support" give by its squadrons to the Eighth Army in the Mareth battles, promoted the fullest co-operation of the air arm with the armies and the Navy throughout the North African theatre and its Mediterranean adjuncts, Sicily, Sardinia and the neighbouring seas. New methods and new weapons were being employed. Squadrons of "tank-buster" aircraft were inflicting heavy blows on the enemy's armour; bombs of 4,000 lb. were being dropped on his fortified positions. The next section of this chapter describes the naval and aerial attack on the Axis communications with Italy.

3: FRAYING THE AXIS LIFE-LINE

While the Germans and Italians struggled violently for more manœuvring space in Tunisia, their sea communications with Europe were subjected to almost

continuous attack by the British Navy and by the strong and increasing Air Forces of the United Nations in Northern Africa. Malta, to the great joy of its spirited inhabitants, became an offensive base for air and submarine attacks on the enemy's shipping, especially in the Mediterranean Narrows and for air-raids on his communications in Sicily and southern Italy. Nor were the enemy's positions in the Levant neglected. Crete, from which his aircraft could raid our communications with the Libyan front or cover convoys bound from Greece to Italy or in the reverse direction was heavily raided on more than one occasion and his pilots approached Egypt and the Syrian coast at their peril. The strain on Axis resources of shipping grew steadily heavier. Although the Italians still kept their battle fleet and cruisers as far out of range of our aircraft as they could, they suffered appreciable losses of their smaller naval units and we took our toll of their submarines and those of their German masters.

To deal first with the exploits of the Navy, the Admiralty issued a description on January 4 of the destruction of the Italian submarine *Emo* "during recent operations off the coast of North Africa" by H.M. trawler *Lord Nuffield* (Lieutenant D. S. Nair). On January 6 the Admiralty further announced the destruction of a large troop transport off Sicily by a submarine commanded by Lieutenant R. B. Lakin. A large supply ship was sunk in Greek waters by the submarine under the command of Lieutenant A. J. Pitt. Two supply ships were torpedoed and "probably sunk" off Sicily and "off the Italian coast." About the same time H.M. submarine *Thrasher* (Lieutenant H. S. Mackenzie) arrived in a British port to refit after sinking sixteen enemy ships in the Mediterranean during her eighteen months commission. The Admiralty announced on January 15 that three small supply ships and a minesweeper had been destroyed and prisoners taken by two submarines in North African waters. The submarines were commanded by Commander B. Bryant and Lieutenant H. B. Turner.

On January 16 our light forces scored two successes in

North African waters. Units commanded by Captain E. B. Stevens destroyed a small supply ship off Jerba Island south of the Gulf of Gabes just after midnight, and early in the morning other light forces commanded by Commander D. E. Holland-Martin attacked an escorted supply ship about 100 miles north-north-east of Tripoli, sank her and damaged her escort. Another Admiralty report, also issued on January 18, announced that a British submarine had torpedoed a large supply ship and forced her ashore in the Gulf of Genoa. A medium-sized supply ship had been sunk off the coast of Sardinia and a third, after being hit by gunfire, ran ashore and was finished off with a torpedo in spite of the intervention of shore batteries. A goods train near Paola on the Calabrian coast was also shelled by a submarine and set on fire.

A more important operation was announced by the Admiralty on January 20. Our destroyers had been raiding Axis sea communications on the nights of January 17, 18 and 19, during which they had destroyed thirteen ships without themselves suffering any casualties or damage.

"South of Sardinia," said the official report, "an enemy supply ship of some 3,000 tons was destroyed. This ship blew up and may well have been carrying ammunition. A small naval vessel carrying supplies of petrol to the island of Lampedusa was intercepted and sunk. Survivors were picked up and made prisoners of war.

A further ten enemy ships of varying sizes and a motor launch were sunk off the Tunisian coast. Of these . . . neither the size nor the nature of three could be definitely established in the darkness, but of the remainder it is known that four were small escort vessels and three were supply vessels of under 2,000 tons."

The destroyers taking part in these operations were H.M. ships *Pakenham* (Captain E. B. Stevens), *Nubian* (Commander D. E. Holland-Martin), *Kelvin* (Commander M. S. Townsend), *Lightning* (Commander H. G. Walters), *Javelin* (Lieut.-Commander J. M. Alliston), and *Loyal* (Lieut.-Commander H. E. Tweedie), with the Greek destroyer *Basilissa Olga*.

The report added that the submarine commanded by Lieutenant S. L. Maydon had chased and sunk a medium-sized north-bound supply ship off Tunisia and that another of our submarines had torpedoed a large enemy supply ship off western Sicily, but could not ascertain the degree of damage inflicted.

An Italian submarine was caught on the surface in tow of three tugs off Tripoli on the night of January 22

by our light coastal forces. The tugs cast off their tow and the submarine was quickly destroyed. Of the tugs, one was driven ashore in flames, while the others seem to have escaped. Our light craft only lost two men wounded, although they were exposed to a heavy fire from shore batteries during the encounter.

The next three Admiralty announcements dealt exclusively with the havoc wrought among enemy shipping in the Mediterranean by our submarines. That of January 25 related the destruction of two medium-sized supply ships, one with a destroyer escort off Jerba Island, and one sixty miles west of Tripoli. Both were north-bound. A small supply ship under escort was torpedoed and sank; a large and modern supply ship escorted by two destroyers was torpedoed off Marittimo Island (near the western tip of Sicily) and a convoy consisting of a medium-sized supply ship escorted by two naval vessels was attacked off the east coast of Sardinia. One of the escorting vessels was sunk by gunfire, the other was damaged and beached, and finally the supply ship was torpedoed and sank.

The next announcement (February 4) recounted the destruction of an anti-submarine vessel and nine supply ships. The anti-submarine vessel was sunk by gunfire off eastern Tunisia, as were five small supply ships. Another such was driven on shore after being shelled and became a total loss. Yet another was damaged. A large tug was beached and abandoned by her crew. Two small supply ships sank after being torpedoed. During these operations the enemy opened "ineffectual fire" from the shore, which may have been delivered by his armoured cars. Three large north-bound transports were attacked, one off Jerba, and the destruction of at least two was regarded as probable. Another enemy vessel, believed to be a large transport, was sighted in tow of two tugs in the Straits of Messina. A submarine succeeded in torpedoing her, but it was impossible to discover whether she sank or not since the submarine had to escape as best she could from a heavy attack made by the transport's escort.

On February 7 the Admiralty announced the destruction of a small tanker, one medium-sized and one small supply ship by a submarine

"operating very close inshore off the Eastern Tunisian coast. . . . Another small supply ship was attacked by gunfire and repeatedly hit, and was finally left in a sinking condition. Off the south-eastern coast of Italy a medium-sized supply ship was torpedoed and sunk by another of H.M. submarines. One of H.M. submarines, surfacing close inshore near Cotrone, bombarded a railway bridge and scored many hits. Shore batteries engaged the submarine without success."

The commanding officers of submarines engaged in the first series of operations were Lieutenants I. L. McGeoch, S. L. Maydon, J. C. Roxburgh, M. L. Crawford. In the second, Commander B. Bryant and Lieutenants A. C. Mars, H. B. Turner, M. G. Lumby and E. T. Stanley were mentioned. In the third announcement the Admiralty mentioned Lieutenant Commanders L. W. Napier and G. R. Colvin and Lieutenant J. S. Stevens.

On February 14 the Ministry of Information made it known that the submarine commanded by Lieutenant N. L. Jewell had returned safely to a home base after carrying out three of the most daring secret missions of the war. Her commander had made important reconnaissances off the Algerian coast to prepare for the Allied landings; had landed and re-embarked the secret mission of United States staff officers to make contact with pro-Allied French leaders, and had finally embarked General Giraud off the southern coast of France and taken him to the open Mediterranean where he transferred to a Catalina flying-boat which bore him to General Eisenhower's headquarters. It was Lieutenant Jewell's first operational command. The reader will doubtless agree that he made a highly successful début.

On February 17 the Admiralty stated that the submarines commanded by Commander J. W. Linton, Lieutenant E. T. Stadley and Lieutenant A. R. Daniell, had destroyed six more supply ships, damaged a seventh, besides torpedoing and "probably" sinking a strongly escorted ship in the central Mediterranean. This last was encountered off the west coast of Sicily. Of the other supply ships three were attacked by gunfire while south-bound and fully laden in the Gulf of Hammamet. Two were sunk and the third was beached. A fourth was shelled and damaged. A medium-sized supply ship was

torpedoed and sank near Brindisi and another was torpedoed and beached "with her back broken" in the same waters, while a large, unescorted east-bound supply ship was hit by two torpedoes and sank. One of our submarines also "bombarded a train in the railway station of San Ambrogio, on the northern coast of Sicily, and scored many hits." On the following night the Admiralty announced a successful attack on an Axis convoy in the Mediterranean in these words :

On Monday night (i.e. February 15-16) a small force of motor torpedo-boats, operating south of Marittima, in company with aircraft of the R.A.F., carried out an attack on a powerfully escorted enemy convoy. This convoy as announced in the Middle East war announcement of February 17, was attacked by the torpedo aircraft which left an enemy tanker blazing from stem to stern. In spite of the strong escort the attack made by the torpedo-boats was pressed home, and a torpedo hit scored on one of the ships in the convoy. The M.T.B.'s also observed a large enemy ship sink after being hit by a torpedo from one of our aircraft.

The next Admiralty announcement (March 4) described a number of fresh successes by our submarines. Since the last report they had sunk

"a large supply ship, a supply ship of medium size, two small supply ships, a minesweeper and two tugs. Our submarines also damaged nine other enemy vessels, among which were a large tanker and a large supply ship." The large supply ship was driven ashore on the coast of the Italian Riviera. The medium-sized supply ship and a small vessel met their fate in the Gulf of Hammamet. One of our submarines reported "that when she surfaced in the Gulf of Genoa, near the Italian coast, she opened fire on a ship-building yard and scored several hits with high-explosive shell on two vessels on the stocks. Another submarine, operating close inshore, shelled a train on a bridge." The submarines which took part in these actions were under the command of Lieut.-Commander C. B. Crouch, Lieutenants S. A. Porter, M. G. Lumby, M. L. Crawford, J. H. Bromage, H. B. Turner, J. S. Stevens and R. J. Clutterbuck.

Netherlands and Greek submarines had also been engaged in the Mediterranean and on February 17 the Netherlands Admiralty reported that the submarine *Dolfijn* had torpedoed and sunk an Italian submarine, an unusual feat, performed for the second time by a Dutch submarine in Mediterranean waters.¹

On March 19 the Admiralty issued the following report :

"Within ten days two of H.M. submarines operating in the Mediterranean have sunk four large enemy supply ships, a tanker of medium size

¹ Cf. *The Tenth Quarter*, p. 134.

and a small supply ship. In addition, they destroyed a naval auxiliary vessel and another smaller supply vessel. Two of the large supply ships were torpedoed off Sicily while they were west-bound with an escort of two destroyers and a sloop. The other two large supply ships were sunk off northern Italy. The tanker was torpedoed off north-west Sicily and burst into flames. She blew up almost immediately. All the others were engaged by gunfire. The small supply ships and an anti-submarine vessel were sunk and a minesweeper was so severely damaged that she had to be run ashore. The submarines which carried out these successful attacks are under the command of Lieut. I. L. M. McGeoch, R.N., and Lieut. R. J. Clutterbuck, R.N."

On the same day the Admiralty allowed the captain of H.M. submarine *Taku* (Lieut. A. J. Pitt), who had recently brought his ship home after many months in the Mediterranean, to tell the story of his narrow escape on one cruise in the *Ægean*. Three days after sinking an Italian supply ship the *Taku* was detected by two enemy anti-submarine craft after she had been diving all day. There was a glassy calm which made it most difficult to elude them. Finding that they could not be shaken off in the open sea he resolved "to get among coastal water noises." He did so, but realizing that the slightest noise might give away his position, he put his ship on the bottom, sent his crew to supper and explained the situation to his crew who remained in "very good heart." The *Taku* surfaced for thirty-five minutes during the night, but the blowers could not be used to clear the air in her on account of the noise which they would have made. "We stayed down," said Lieutenant Pitt

"for the rest of the night and through the following day. Everyone was panting a good deal from midday onwards; four or five of the crew were very flaked out at the end of the day. I gave the order to surface about 6.30 in the evening: we had eluded our pursuers. All hands were given a corrective dose of halibut oil and were made to gargle; by morning everyone was perfectly fit again."

On March 31 the Admiralty reported further successes by our submarines. The report related that

"Four of H.M. submarines, operating against Axis supply lines to Tunisia, have sunk six more enemy ships and seriously damaged four others." Of the ships seen to sink one was a large fully-laden vessel in convoy which was intercepted off northern Sicily, another destroyed in the same area carried cased petroleum, two were of medium and two of small size. One of the damaged ships was believed to have sunk later. The other three were large strongly escorted ships and counter-action by their destroyer escorts prevented our submarines from observing the full results of their

attacks. Several smaller ships were also destroyed. Another of our submarines blew up a wrecked supply ship while it was being unloaded off the Calabrian coast. The submarines engaged in these attacks were commanded by Lieut.-Commander M. R. Wingfield, and Lieutenants E. T. Stanley, J. S. Wraith, E. J. Turner and M. L. Crawford.

Our submarines did not always escape from the enemy's counter-attacks. During the quarter the Admiralty reported as "overdue" and "presumed lost," the *Utmost* (Lieutenant J. W. Coombe), one of the most successful of our submarines in the Mediterranean war (reported January 10); the *Traveller* (Lieutenant D. St. Clair-Ford); *P 311* (Commander R. D. Cayley), whose commander was one of the outstanding submarine captains in the present war (March 9); and *P 48* (Lieutenant M. E. Faber).¹ On April 4 was reported the loss of H.M. submarine *Tigris* (Lieut.-Commander G. R. Colvin), whose captain had been mentioned as recently as March 4 (see p. 49). On the whole, however, though the enemy professed to have employed new contrivances for the destruction of submarines with success, our losses were not excessive considering the general clearness of Mediterranean waters even in winter, the strength of the Italians in destroyers, E-boats and other small craft in these narrow seas and the large numbers of aircraft at their and the Germans' disposal.

Our most noteworthy aerial operations against the Axis supply lines and European bases in the Mediterranean must next be chronicled briefly. To take first the attacks on Italian and Sicilian ports and aerodromes during January, joint announcements² from G.H.Q., Cairo, and official reports from A.H.Q., Algiers, recorded air operations on eighteen-days in which many targets were attacked. The aerodrome which the Italians had constructed on Lampedusa Island was bombed on at least nine occasions. Lying roughly half-way between Malta and the port of Susa in Tunis and about 150 miles

¹ The loss of H.M. submarine *Traveller* was reported on January 24 and that of *P 48* on February 10. It does not follow that the two P-class submarines were lost in the Mediterranean, but neither Germans nor Japanese so far as the writer knows claimed any in other seas during the period under review.

² i.e. by Army and R.A.F.

from the nearest point in southern Sicily, it was a valuable observation post from which hostile aircraft could watch the movements of our surface ships and, on occasion, of our submarines off Tripoli, the Gulf of Gabes and the Gulf of Hammamet. Palermo Harbour and the Licata sulphur factories in Sicily were mentioned among our targets, and the numerous aerodromes in southern Sicily were frequently bombed. The ferry terminus at Messina on the straits between Sicily and the Italian mainland was raided on January 25 and military targets at Messina were attacked by our fighter-bombers on January 30 and by American heavy bombers on January 31. On January 11 Liberators of the 9th U.S.A.A.F. carried out a heavy attack by day on Naples. Cloud obscured observation, but one very large fire was caused. Two American machines were shot down by attacking Merops, at least one of which was destroyed. Less spectacular but highly important work was done by the R.A.F. operating from the three Maltese airfields. Warehouses, harbours, airfields and railways were among their targets by day and night.

"Aircraft from Malta have been carrying on relentless war against Sicily," wrote the Special Correspondent of *The Times* at Cairo on January 29. "In three days they have shot up 26 Italian trains, and in the past week 23 locomotives in Sicily or the toe of Italy have been destroyed or badly damaged. Road convoys have also been attacked, and altogether fighters from Malta have made a pretty mess of Italian communications."

In February the volume of our attack increased. Raids by "intruder" pilots from Malta where Mosquito bombers had strengthened our offensive power followed one another night after night and very few days passed without an official reference to our activities over Sicily. Heavy bombers from Algeria also crossed the narrows on several occasions to attack Sicilian targets, e.g. on the night of February 8-9 when they raided Palermo and Trapani. Sardinian targets were likewise attacked from Algeria. The Italians had several airfields in the island and an important aerodrome and seaplane base at Cagliari from which a good many of the aircraft which raided Algiers and Bône and attacked Allied warships and transports off North Africa took off.

On February 8 A.H.Q. North Africa announced that on the afternoon of the 7th Flying Fortresses and Marauder bombers escorted by Lightning fighters had attacked Cagliari, making many hits on the aerodrome and its buildings and the seaplane station. Enemy fighters went up, but five were shot down without loss. The attack was followed up that night by Wellington bombers. The next attack was made on "enemy airfields in Sardinia." The heavy and medium bombers engaged and their fighter escort beat off attempts to intercept them, and shot down four fighters and a seaplane. The third attack during the month was made by Flying Fortresses on February 28.

On the Italian mainland the coastal railways round the "toe" of Italy up to Taranto were attacked from Malta, as were various military targets on the Calabrian coast. Naples was raided on several occasions from Libya or Malta, on February 7 when American heavy bombers hit several ships in the harbour, on February 15 when two ships were hit and harbour installations damaged, on the 20th when "heavies" hit three ships there and others bombed targets at Cotrone, and finally before dawn on the 25th when Liberators scored hits on harbour works and also did damage at Cotrone. But the heaviest air attacks on Italy during the month came from England. On the night of February 4-5 strong forces of bombers attacked Turin and the naval base at Spezia. The Turin defences were stronger than they had been on December 11, but they were badly handled. Visibility was good, many heavy bombs hit the factories which were our chief targets, and after only twenty minutes "it was difficult to count the fires." Our losses were negligible.¹ Milan was heavily bombed on February 14-15 and Spezia suffered again.

In March bad weather during one period in the first half of the month and the concentration of air attack on the Axis forces on the Tunisian front, especially during the fighting on the Mareth line, somewhat diminished the

¹ Only three machines on a night when Turin, Spezia, the Ruhr and Lorient were bombed.

number of raids on Italy and Sicily. The enemy, nevertheless, suffered extensive damage at many points. Naples suffered four attacks, in the last of which on the night of March 21-22 several oil tanks were hit and great fires caused while every bomber returned safely. In Sicily Palermo, Licata, Messina, Comiso aerodrome, Porto Empedocle, were the principal targets and intruder pilots continued to harass the enemy's railway communications. As a rule neither the Italian flak nor Italian fighters gave overmuch trouble and our losses in these operations were relatively slight. A few German machines were shot down, and during a daylight attack on Palermo by heavy American bombers from Algeria, six unspecified fighters which counter-attacked were destroyed (March 22).

It would be tedious to enumerate all the occasions on which Allied aircraft attacked enemy shipping in the Mediterranean Narrows. A joint announcement from Cairo on January 20 told of the blowing-up of a supply ship and the infliction of heavy damage to two others by naval torpedo aircraft which caught their victims off the Tunisian coast. Another ship was torpedoed in the Ægean and sank. American airmen attached to the 8th Army, who had already disabled and perhaps sunk a large tanker and a merchantman on the night of January 20-21, damaged or sank smaller ships on the following night. Bombers with fighter escort from North Africa hit a merchantman and destroyed six fighters in a sweep between Tunis and Sicily on January 22 and sank two small ships next day. Two Italian destroyers were bombed and one left burning in the Narrows on the 27th and another was torpedoed from the air off Pantellaria on the night of January 30-31 where two transport aircraft were brought down next night and a ship in convoy was torpedoed. After several attacks on small craft, a big tanker was left ablaze in the Sicilian Channel on February 15-16, and our torpedo-bombers scored further successes during February. A strongly escorted convoy was roughly handled by bombers and fighters operating from Algeria on February 22 when four ships were hit and four of the convoy's air escort were shot down. The

destruction of five Italian barges carrying motor transport off the Tunisian coast on the same night was another valuable success.

After an interval seemingly caused by bad weather

"attacks on enemy sea communications were resumed by our bombers on Sunday (March 7). An enemy convoy, heavily escorted by warships and aircraft, was attacked from a low level by . . . Mitchells escorted by . . . Lightnings between Sicily and Tunisia. One ship was sunk, another was left sinking, and two more set on fire. Five of the escorting enemy aircraft were shot down. Three and a half hours later heavy bombers attacked the same convoy which was then circling round a burning ship. Three more ships were hit: one blew up and sank immediately and the other two were left on fire. One enemy fighter was destroyed.¹

After several minor successes another convoy was successfully attacked on March 22 in the Sicilian Channel. A.H.Q. reported that an enemy troopship had been set on fire and a supply ship and an escort vessel damaged. Eight of the escorting Axis aircraft were shot into the sea. Such were the published achievements of the Allied air forces in Central Mediterranean waters.

Several air raids were launched against Crete during this quarter, e.g. on January 9, on February 9, when we bombed the airfields at Heraklion and Kastelli Pediada, on February 16, and again on the night of February 19-20 when the airfields suffered further punishment. The enemy made several counter-raids on our communications on the coast of Cyrenaica from Crete, but without effecting much and not without loss. Thus on the night of January 15-16 four of six bombers came to grief in an attack on Tobruk. Night fighters and A.A. guns were too much for them. A few enemy aircraft were also shot down while approaching the Suez Canal and Alexandria.

It must not be supposed that the enemy maintained a purely defensive attitude under and above the Mediterranean during these three months. His destroyers seem to have confined themselves to convoy protection, but German and Italian submarines were active and the Germans in their frequent announcements of extensive sinkings (q.v. Chapter IV, Section 1) often claimed to have wrought great destruction in North African

¹ A.H.Q. report of March 8.

waters. They also averred that Axis aircraft had inflicted damage and loss on Allied shipping anchored in North African ports or bound thereto. In January they claimed the destruction of three large cargo vessels by the *Luftwaffe*, the disablement of five more off Bougie, and the sinking by U-boats of a large cargo vessel off Algiers. These were samples of many such announcements. The marked decrease of references to enemy raids on Bône, Algiers and other ports in announcements from A.H.Q. after the New Year did, however, suggest that the enemy's bombing activity was being successfully countered by our increasing strength in night fighters and flak. The failure of two such attacks was recorded in an Admiralty announcement of March 16. It stated that :

"Two enemy bombers were shot down on Monday (March 15) by the destroyer *Derwent* (Commander R. H. Wright) during an unsuccessful attack by twelve aircraft on an Allied convoy off Tripolitania. A third bomber was damaged. . . . H.M.S. *Derwent* suffered neither casualties nor damage." The announcement added that Axis aircraft attacking a convoy off Tunisia were beaten off by the fire of the destroyers *Vanoc* (Lieut.-Commander C. F. Churchill) and *Verity* (Lieut.-Commander A. R. Horn-castle). One was certainly and a second probably destroyed.

A number of U-boats were believed to have been destroyed in the Mediterranean and its approaches during the quarter. The only official reference to their destruction was contained in an announcement by the Canadian Navy Minister, Mr. MacDonald, on March 14. He said that the Canadian corvette *Regina* had sunk an Italian submarine in the Mediterranean making twenty prisoners, and that this was the third hostile submarine to be sunk by Canadian corvettes within a month. Two Canadian corvettes, H.M.C.S. *Louisburg*, sunk with a loss of thirty-eight lives in February by aircraft attack, and H.M.C.S. *Weyburn*, which sank after an underwater explosion in March with the loss of six lives, including her captain, Lieut.-Commander Golby, were lost in these waters during the quarter.

On February 16 Admiral Cunningham said *inter alia* that since the initial landing in North Africa 780 Allied ships, totalling 6,500,000 tons, had arrived safely in North African ports.

"This is developing into a war of supply," he said. "We are battling to get ours in and to keep theirs out. We are making considerable inroads into enemy shipping. . . . We are developing new methods to protect our convoys ; we have to, because the enemy is always developing new methods of attack. But the submarine war is going very well. . . ."

The last assurance and the Admiral's statement that he believed that the enemy was losing a third of the ships which he was sending across with supplies and reinforcements for Axis armies in Tunisia, were the best antidotes to the rather depressing insistence of Axis broadcasts that the Mediterranean adventure was piling up our shipping losses and to the inconclusive nature of the campaign in northern Tunisia.

4 : POLITICS IN NORTH AFRICA

The development of the political situation in French North Africa and of the relations between General Giraud's Administration there and the French National Committee in London, must now be chronicled. It is only possible in the compass of this section to give an outline of the changes of the three months under review. The New Year found British public opinion still much exercised by the policy of the State Department at Washington which had recognized Admiral Darlan provisionally as the leader of the French forces, civil and military, in northern Africa, and disposed to place the worst interpretation on General Giraud's policy, after the assassination of Darlan, of cautious and gradual reform. On January 3 the General's spokesman told French and Allied Press representatives at Algiers that the purpose of the arrests after Admiral Darlan's violent death was to clear up certain circumstances connected with it and to determine whether it was intended to be the first of a series of assassinations. A number of persons interned by the Vichy Government's orders in North Africa, most of whom were Communists or Trade Unionists, would be released provided that they undertook not to engage in political activity during the war. It was General Giraud's policy to base his regime on the laws of the Third Republic, supplemented by such decrees

as were necessary to meet the new situation. He concluded with the words: "the world must realize that after two years of unbroken Axis propaganda complete order cannot be restored in North Africa in a few days."

On the same day Mr. Macmillan arrived to take up his duties as Resident British Minister at Allied Headquarters. He immediately got into touch with General Giraud, who then left for Dakar on a tour of inspection in West Africa from which he returned on January 13. Meanwhile de Gaullist circles in London gave out that General Giraud had agreed in principle to meet General de Gaulle, but would prefer to delay the meeting until the end of January. On the day of his return it was announced in Algiers that a commission had been formed to study the question of the release of political prisoners and refugees, and that its members included the American and British Consuls-General, with representatives of General Eisenhower's staff and of General Giraud's Administration. It became known on the same day that the Comte de Paris, a claimant to the throne of France, was somewhere in North Africa, probably in the Spanish zone of Morocco, and that de Gaullist prisoners in North Africa had been released.

On January 14 Mr. Macmillan made an important statement to the Press. Its chief points were:

Firstly, General Giraud was "determined to reach an agreement with General de Gaulle," and that a settlement was in sight. The American and British Governments were helping them to get into contact with each other. Secondly, any Government which might be formed as a result of the meeting of the French Generals would be "for the duration," a provisional affair. The Allies had only extended provisional *de facto* recognition to the French regime in North Africa, and they would extend no fuller recognition to any combined de Gaullist-Giraudin Government. After the war the Allies would make it possible for the French and other European peoples to choose their own form of government. Thirdly, he stressed the necessity of bringing civilian stores to alleviate civilian distress in North Africa. Economic reconstruction was as important as political reconstruction. Fourthly, he held that since his own arrival in North Africa he had felt "absolutely convinced that General Eisenhower was right in dealing with Admiral Darlan."

On January 16 it was announced that orders had been issued by General Giraud's Administration for the release of all Frenchmen who had been arrested for favouring

the Allies and for the relaxation of certain anti-Jewish measures, and next day Lord Swinton, British Resident Minister in West Africa, saw M. Boisson, Governor-General of French West Africa, at Dakar to establish a working arrangement between the British and the French administrations. So far the situation had improved. But on January 19 came an event which caused great heart-searchings in Britain and in the U.S.A. M. Chatel, Governor-General of Algeria, who was alleged to have remained in touch with Vichy representatives in Spain, was deprived of his post, and M. Peyrouton, who had reached Dakar recently from Argentina, was appointed in his stead.

The career of this official had been varied, but generally successful. He was by common consent a first-class administrator, who had restored order so vigorously in Tunisia where he was Resident-General in 1935-36 that Laval had transferred him to the Embassy at Buenos Aires to oblige Mussolini. His politics were those of the Vicar of Bray. Summoned to save the Tunisian situation in the fatal May of 1940, he reached the Regency too late, but the national disaster did not prevent him from accepting office as Minister of Interior in the short-lived Ministry formed by Marshal Pétain in December, 1940.¹ The Italians (and Laval) would have none of him and he was soon back at the Embassy at Buenos Aires, where he remained until Laval's return. Drawing a line somewhere, he then resigned, thus acquiring the favourable notice of the State Department, which may have suggested him to General Giraud.

The views of Mr. Cordell Hull were not shared by many Americans, e.g. Mr. Walter Lippmann, who on January 19 made M. Peyrouton's appointment the text for a sharp demand for the revision of U.S. policy in North Africa. It might have been expedient to deal with Vichy Frenchmen already in North Africa when the Allies landed, but "the deliberate summoning of Peyrouton from Argentina is a horse of a wholly different colour," and was regarded as an error even by men who had served Pétain "to the bitter end." British criticisms, too, were severe if sometimes ill-informed,² but Mr. Hull refused to comment, and after a while British and Americans in North Africa began to confess that whatever the sinuosities of M. Peyrouton's earlier career, he was now

¹ cf. *The Sixth Quarter*, pp. 222-224.

² e.g. the attempt of one newspaper to make him responsible for the anti-Jewish legislation of the Darlan and second Laval regimes!

running straight and was administering Algeria with a competence from which the Allies could only profit. The de Gaullists in London, however, remained highly critical of the appointment; and it is probable that it was one of the reasons why the de Gaulle-Giraud meeting at Casablanca broke the ice but failed to raise the temperature much beyond sub-normal.

Still, the meeting had some good results. On January 26 the French National Committee in London issued a statement to the effect that General de Gaulle accompanied by General Catroux and Admiral d'Argenlieu had met General Giraud at Casablanca, and that in the course of their conversations "a preliminary examination was made of the conditions under which the French effort in the war of liberation could be developed." The General and the National Committee reaffirmed their aim of bringing about the "complete union of the Empire and the armed forces, in conjunction with the movement of resistance in France, to be accomplished in consonance with the wishes and the dignity of the French people."

Further, the two generals issued a joint statement announcing their complete agreement "on the end to be achieved, which is the liberation of France and the triumph of human liberties by the total defeat of the enemy." This end would be attained by "the union in war of all Frenchmen fighting side by side with all their allies."

Political conditions in North Africa began, henceforth, to improve. Addressing the Press on January 29, General Giraud, after cordially recognizing the assistance France in Africa was receiving from her allies, paid a tribute to the initiative of the Fighting French and said that he and General de Gaulle would collaborate closely. France's only political aim at present must be to win the war. He emphasized the necessity of order and said that while he and General de Gaulle

"had decided to establish a permanent liaison" in military, financial and economic affairs, they did not propose to take up political questions at present. He emphasized the necessity of walking prudently and taking no precipitate steps. But he stated the measures were already in train to restore properties of which the native Jews of French Africa had been deprived.

Mr. Eden had already given a broad hint to the French authorities in North Africa as to the expediency of dealing speedily and justly with the persons interned there on account of their sympathy with Allies. Speaking on this subject in the Commons on January 20, he said that at the beginning of the year no British subjects were detained on this count, and the French were being released, but some 200 Poles, about 100 Russians and a few Czechs and Belgians remained under detention in Algeria. Arrangements were being made for their early release. On February 3 he reminded Parliament that the responsibility for the administration of French North Africa was primarily a French affair—a fact which some British M.P.s

and journalists sometimes forgot. The first interest of the British and American Governments was to see that everything possible was done to promote the combined war effort. General Eisenhower was receiving full collaboration from the Administration and the troops under General Giraud were playing their part in the fighting.

As to the relations between General de Gaulle's French and the Giraud Administration he said that the cleavages between Frenchmen which had arisen could not be easily bridged, but important progress had been made. He added that General Giraud's one political test was readiness to fight and work against the enemy, and that he was reported to have said: "The British are right to support de Gaulle. He is the only Frenchman who has spoken for two years with the voice of France."

On the same day it was announced eleven of the fourteen persons arrested after Admiral Darlan's assassination had been released and allowed to remain at home under house arrest. Next day French Communist Deputies who had been sent to North Africa from France were released unconditionally. This was publicly interpreted by Mr. Macmillan (February 8) as evidence of the more liberal character of the Administration. On February 20 General Bergeret informed the Press that of the political prisoners still detained over 3,000 were Spaniards, mostly Communists of the Spanish Republican Army. They were being released so far as they could be employed in Algeria or Morocco. All de Gaullists had been released.¹

On February 5 the French Imperial Council met. General Nogues and M. Boisson represented Morocco and West Africa respectively. It decided to appoint General Giraud

"Civil and Military Commander-in-Chief" with extended powers. The Imperial Council disbanded itself in favour of a consultative War Committee. An Economic Superior Council was set up representing the principal divisions of French Northern and Western Africa. A Delegate-General for inter-Allied affairs responsible directly to the Commander-in-Chief was to be appointed. The Pétainist and most suspect *Service d'Ordre Legionnaire*, the survival of which in French North Africa had provoked acid British and de Gaullist comment, was dissolved.

¹ British critics of French affairs do not often realize the depth of the distrust with which Communists, native or foreign, are still regarded by many patriotic Frenchmen on account of their share in the sabotage of military morale in 1940, of the alleged harbouring of prominent French Communists by the Germans, and of the fact that between the French collapse and the German attack on the Soviet Union, French Communism deprecated resistance to the enemy. This being so, the concessions made by the Giraud administration were the more important.

A gradual liberalization of all branches of the Administration had now begun. Before its phases are chronicled it is well to give some quotations from an interesting article published by *The Times* on February 25 and analysing the composition of the Giraud Government (for such it was) apparently at the beginning of February. The Administration, wrote the special correspondent of *The Times* at Algiers,

represented three schools of thought, the "patriotic and disinterested men who really intended to commit post-war France to nothing beforehand by any government which they may set up here"; those who had been bitterly disappointed by the collapse of the Third Republic and believed that a very different system of government from that which had proved its degeneracy must be set up; and finally, the opportunists, "anxious to safeguard any positions and perquisites which they may have picked up in the past three years, but ready to adopt any policy which seems likely to improve their prospects. . . ." The chief representatives of the first group were General Giraud and General Bergeret, "simple, honourable soldiers with neither experience of nor aptitude for politics." M. Boisson was also understood to belong to the first group. The second group which was well represented in the army had no desire to restore the Third Republic which its members regarded as corrupt and futile. Many of them had Royalist sympathies. The opportunists were political chameleons, but some of them "had their uses." In practice these divisions of opinion limited the powers which the Imperial Council had bequeathed to General Giraud.

Nevertheless the situation improved. On February 22 M. Peyrouton called on all factions to co-operate and not make the task of the Allies more difficult by their differences. He went so far as to say

"I came to Algeria with a reputation for harshness. I certainly at other times and in other places punished those men who declared that they were solely defending France. I punished them only because they threatened peace of mind when calm was more necessary than anything." More convincing than this apologia was the appointment of M. Bringard, who had taken an active part in assisting the Allied landings, as Director of the Sûreté (Security Police) in Algeria and of M. Battistini, a strong pro-Ally, as Prefect of Oran. The release of all political prisoners in West Africa came next. Bans on Gaullist newspapers were lifted, hardened Pétainists removed from high posts in the Police, and on March 7 General Giraud dismissed M. Bouni, a high official who had published the anti-Jewish decrees of Vichy in the official *Algerian Gazette* of March 2, which was withdrawn. A statement was broadcast from Morocco explaining that Vichy decrees were invalid in French North Africa, and explaining that the German occupation "had interrupted the free exercise of French sovereignty."

The High Economic Council for French Africa had met on March 1 when General Giraud, in an eloquent speech, said that he and his Admini-

stration excluded no one for their opinions. There was only one crime that they would not forgive—treason against the motherland. He added that America was sending them arms, and he knew that when he asked for them Mr. Churchill would send them too. He said that he adhered “completely and wholeheartedly” to the Atlantic Charter and insisted that France must not let slip her present opportunity of regaining the place which she should never have abandoned, and which she must win back by fighting in order to have her rightful place in the peace negotiations.

The Free French in London were still somewhat anxious as to the future. General Giraud's Administration had the guns and the numbers; the general's speeches sounded well, but many of the Left Wingers round General de Gaulle were inclined to suspect the officers of the African Army of planning to foist some “new order,” perhaps an old-fashioned monarchy, on an unconsulted France. But on March 14 a fine speech broadcast from Algiers by General Giraud did much to remove misunderstandings. He began by calling the attention of Frenchmen to the fact that Alsace and Lorraine had just been incorporated in Germany without a word of protest from Vichy France. He was entitled to speak for the French people. He had lived among them, two years as a prisoner of war, eight months in the so-called free zone.

He had seen their courageous resistance to the conscription of labour, the hateful spectacle of children snatched from their parents, “the heroism of hostages proud to die in order to maintain the spirit of resistance.” The people of France had never accepted the armistice. They were fortified by “the heroic resistance of the British people fighting alone,” and France had never known “the worst catastrophe for nations”—the loss of faith in oneself. British and Americans were now putting their full effort into the war and Russia was giving the world a great example of patriotism. French soldiers had shown how they could fight, and had been worthy of their traditions at Mejez el-Bab and Bir Hakeim. Some 50,000 French troops were facing the Axis at Ksar Gilan and others were coming up from Libya and Lake Chad. “There can be only one French Army facing Germany, whether it comes from Algeria or Libya, whether obeying other orders it resisted the Americans or whether in obedience to my orders it co-operates with them.” They would have their arms from their allies. It was not possible to extemporize equipment for an army of 300,000 men in a few days, but deliveries were beginning.

Then came the most important part of the General's remarkable speech. He gave the people of France the most solemn assurance that their sacred right to choose their own provisional Government themselves would be fully safeguarded. Conditions permitting them to make

their choice in lawful order and with their liberties restored would be guaranteed them. This situation would be created as soon as France had been liberated.

"I am the servant of the French people," he continued. "I am not their leader. All Frenchmen who are with me . . . are servants of the people of France. To-morrow we shall be servants of the provisional Government which they will have freely chosen, and we undertake to surrender our powers to it."

Legislation decreed after June 22, 1940, was null and void, not being based upon the will of the people, whether it was imposed under foreign duress or issued by the Vichy Government. Measures had been and would be taken to restore French traditions in North Africa, but they could not instantly abolish all existing legislation whatever its origin without causing confusion. They must modify and adapt it to meet a new situation. Meanwhile the Municipal Assemblies and the *Conseils Généraux*¹ would resume their traditional role with their members elected by the people. Racial legislation differentiating between native Jews and Moslems was abrogated.

France would end the war as a victorious nation so that when peace was discussed she would take her place in the discussion in full possession of her oversea territories. But the union of Frenchmen must be complete and effective and must include all Frenchmen, not those in France alone. Their union was essential, "a question of life and death" for France, for union in the struggle could alone ensure union in the reconstruction of their country. He was ready "to co-operate with all those who, accepting those basic and traditional principles of which I have spoken and joining in the solemn pledge which I have given to the French people, are taking part in the struggle against the enemy."

His speech had an unexpected conclusion: "God grant," he said, "that victory will enable men of good will to live together in tolerance, understanding and, dare I say, in loving kindness. Surely this is the commandment which is given us from on high and which we have so often disregarded. After this tragic experience let us forget it less and apply it better. This is not a philosophy of weakness. Take the word of one who escaped from Königstein."²

The effect of the speech was excellent. On March 17 the French National Committee in London issued a memorandum which bore every appearance of being a friendly reply to it, and showed that General Giraud was

¹ The *Conseils Généraux* are councils composed of elected representatives of Departments or groups of Departments—regional local government organs.

² The General departed from the fashion (set by two generations of Republican politicians) whom anti-religious bias or the fear of being charged with "clericalism" deterred from making any public reference to God, save of an atheistic character.

in communication with General de Gaulle through General Catroux. On the same day Mr. Churchill stated in Parliament that the British Government warmly welcomed General Giraud's speech, in particular his repudiation of the armistice, his abrogation of racial laws and his decision to restore the elected Municipal and Regional Councils. He urged Frenchmen to unite.

"In view of General Giraud's speech and the National Committee's memorandum, it now appears that no questions of principle divide those two bodies of Frenchmen." He added that he had informed the United States Government of his intention to make this statement, with which he believed they were in entire agreement. In fact his statement was echoed and applauded by Mr. Cordell Hull.

There were further changes in the North African Administration during March. General Bergeret resigned his post of Secretary-General of the War Committee and M. Rigaud that of Political Secretary. M. de Murville took General Bergeret's place. On March 26 General Catroux arrived in Algiers and conferred with General Giraud next day, and on March 28 M. Peyrouton ordered the immediate reinstatement of all municipal and departmental authorities, administrators and personnel whom Vichy had dismissed. The traces of Vichy rule were growing fainter.

NOTE.—For the French West Indian colonies see Chapter VI, section 1.

5 : THE MIDDLE EASTERN STATES

The Egyptian Budget for 1943-44 was published on February 2. It balanced at L.E.65,000,000, more than L.E.13,000,000 than the Budget for 1942-43 without recourse to reserves. The economic situation showed some improvement. The spring crops promised well and Egypt was able to export some of her grain surplus to less fortunate parts of the Middle East. Many distinguished visitors arrived during the quarter, among them the King of Greece and M. Tsouderos (q.v. Chapter VIII, Section 2), the child King Feisal II of Iraq, Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands and many British and Allied ministers of State and generals. It was reported that

relations between King Farouk and Nahas Pasha, the Prime Minister, had deteriorated.

Palestine The Recruiting Department of the Jewish Agency gave out on January 11 that over 20,000 Jews of both sexes had volunteered for service with the British forces up to January 1. On February 3 it was announced that the Administration had agreed to admit 4,000 Jewish children from Bulgaria, where German-inspired persecution both of native and refugee Jews was making headway. Later in the month over 1,200 Jewish refugees from Poland, some two-thirds of whom were children, reached Palestine.

Syria and Lebanon On March 19 General Catroux proclaimed the restoration of the free constitution of the Lebanese Republic and promulgated decrees for the holding of a general election of members of an entirely-elected Parliament,¹ empowering a provisional Government to hold and preside over these elections and appointing Dr. Ayyoub Tabet President of the Republic. The decrees were well received.

In Syria, where the President, Sheikh Taj-ed-din, had died on January 17, General Catroux took measures analogous to those which he had taken in the Lebanon. He entrusted the formation of a Ministry to hold elections to Ata Ayyubi Pasha, a former Prime Minister who formed a Government on March 25.

Iraq On January 16 General Nuri Pasha's Government declared war on the three major Axis nations. They made their declaration in the form of an announcement recounting the various wrongs and insults which Iraq had suffered.

In view of the hostile attitude adopted by these Powers towards Iraq over a long period, in view, too, of the subversive activities promoted by their agents over a long period against Iraq, of their hostile broadcasts, their incessant attempts to incite internal strife in Iraq, their broadcast insults to the Iraqi Royal family which were designed to undermine the nation's loyalty, and their support of the recent anti-constitutional outbreak; in view also of the interest of Iraq in particular and of the Arab peoples in general to adhere to the Declaration of the United Nations, the Government of Iraq considered themselves at war with Germany, and with Italy and Japan who had "actively assisted Germany to carry out her intentions in Iraq."

In a message of congratulation to Nuri Pasha, Mr. Churchill expressed the special satisfaction of the British people that "the State which we helped to create during the first world war will henceforth participate with us in the present struggle."

¹ Since the dissolution of Parliament in 1939 both Syria and Lebanon had been governed by French-nominated Ministries.

It was believed by many persons versed in Arab politics that Nuri Pasha's chief intention was to be in a better position to raise the issues of Arab union and also the Palestine question than he could have occupied had Iraq remained a non-belligerent ally. Subsequent events tended to confirm this belief.

On February 6 most of Qavam es-Sultaneh's Cabinet Persia resigned. He secured a personal vote of confidence but could not form a Ministry. On February 14 Parliament withdrew its confidence and after his resignation elected M. Ali Suheyli Prime Minister by 72 votes to 38. The Shah entrusted him with the formation of a Ministry. He formed one and appeared before Parliament on February 18 to announce his Government's programme of four main points. These were :

1. Firm collaboration with the United States, Great Britain and Russia.
2. Measures to assure food supplies immediately and over a long term period.
3. Reduction of the cost of living and stabilization of prices.
4. Progress in agriculture, sanitation and education with improvements in the condition of the working classes, peasantry and Government officials.

The new Prime Minister expressed his confidence that he would have the support of Parliament, the public and the Allies in his efforts to improve difficult economic conditions. He obtained a majority of 89 votes to 10, and in his speech to Parliament he stated that he would spare no effort to improve the good relations between his country and the Allies. "Loyal observance of the Treaty is unquestionably in the best interests of Persia." Unfortunately the Prime Minister's efforts to improve the food situation were greatly impeded by food hoarding, the cornering of grain and the machinations of high officials in league with the grain merchants.

CHAPTER III

THE GERMAN-SOVIET WAR

By Lieutenant-Colonel H. G. de Watteville, C.B.E., p.s.c.

On New Year's Day the important German "hedgehog," Velikye Luki, was stormed by the Red Army: such was the gift presented to the Russian people to celebrate the coming of 1943. Nevertheless, this success possessed a far deeper significance than the mere capture of a topographical point, even though this might be a very strongly fortified locality. For, in spite of the encirclement of their Sixth Army at Stalingrad, the German High Command had remained seemingly content to believe that any Russian winter offensive for 1942-43 must follow the general trend of the former Soviet counter-attack of 1941-42. During that great effort the failure of the Red Army to capture any of the German "hedgehogs" except Mojaisk had been most marked. Indeed, the obvious miscarriage of the attempt to reduce the "hedgehog" of Staraya Russka, which was garrisoned by the German Sixteenth Army, on the southern bank of Lake Ilmen, seemed to prove the contention that, in winter, the Russian Army would not be able to bring forward, to supply, or at least to maintain for any length of time, the troops and material necessary to conduct really serious siege operations. Moreover, during the past summer the main "hedgehogs" situated along the entire front had been rendered yet more formidable. Most of them were now, i.e. in winter, fortified regions, measuring at least 12 to 20 miles in diameter, surrounded by a formidable barrier of defences, built of snow and felled trees, and welded into a frozen mass offering a fearsome glacis of ice to be negotiated by any attacking tanks. Behind these lines there lay a maze of tank-traps, obstacles, minefields,

which were manned by adequate garrisons of infantry, assisted by heavy and light artillery, aircraft and tanks.

But the Russians, profiting from their experiences of the previous winter, had in fact organized fresh armies destined for this winter campaign on an entirely new basis. New tanks, painted white, new types of artillery and, in particular, new forms of winter transport designed for crossing the snow, had been manufactured and were being sent into action. Further, these fresh troops had shown that they had acquired a remarkable facility for movements over ice and snow, and also by night. "The Russians have become veritable artists in night marches," the *Kölnische Zeitung* could write. In addition, these forces would carry out attacks even in a raging snowstorm.

"Visibility did not exceed 80 feet." Thus wrote a German reporter of a Russian attack. "Hidden by curtains of snow the Russians, ever supported by tanks, would renew their endless attacks against our defences. Suddenly a tank would appear like a ghost through a snow-squall. In this weird setting the action went on, we expecting every moment to see another grim spectre to the right or to the left, spreading fire and death in our midst. It was only at a few yards range that one could distinguish friend from foe. What moral and physical courage did not such a struggle demand from each one of us, from general down to stretcher-bearer?"

By means of such action and relying largely on admirable work by their artillery, the Russians had penetrated the defences of Velikye Luki, and then fought down the German garrison in the very streets of the town. The enemy was virtually exterminated.

The Russians, enjoying considerable numerical superiority, could attack at several points so as to find the weak spots, much after the manner of eighteenth-century siege warfare. Thereupon, depending on the results of much accurate aerial photography done during the summer, their attacks would in the end inevitably pierce the German fortifications. Next, by seeking to widen the first breach made in the German lines, and by bringing even heavy guns to the very front after heavy aerial bombing of the enemy's counter-batteries, the Russian troops could advance swiftly. Infantry supported by tanks might thus find an easy task before them.

The shock thereby administered to the German High

Command was considerable. For it proved three facts, each of far-reaching import. Firstly, the Russians were in possession of men and material in numbers sufficient to carry out operations at huge distances from each other along the entire front. Such material was, moreover, of a nature that might readily overwhelm the fortified centres on which the Germans had so firmly relied. Secondly, here was proof that the Russian war industries had not been incapacitated by the German victories of 1942 in the Ukraine from producing entirely new models of armament. Did this not betoken the fact that the Russian factories beyond the Volga, and beyond the Ural too, were now in full production of all essential war material? Lastly, there was the increasing tactical skill displayed by the Red Army. Could this possibly be anything but a flat contradiction of the flamboyant Nazi *communiqués* that had so incessantly proclaimed the total destruction of the Russian armed might? The surprise caused by the fall of Velikye Luki was so unpleasant that for many days the German High Command prevaricated in their reports before admitting the full truth of the Russian claims. There was yet another serious result of the disaster—the fact that an important section of railway communications had been lost, one indeed that threatened to cut off the German forces round Leningrad from the rest of their front.

But there was still more to disquiet the German High Command. From various Russian *communiqués* published at the turn of the year it gradually became clear that as soon as the fighting at Kotelnikovo had taken a decided turn in favour of the Soviets, and that the attempt to relieve Stalingrad had been defeated, Russian attacks on the great German salient in the Caucasus began to grow in extent and in intensity. From Kotelnikovo along the Krasnodar railway was a natural line of advance. More remarkable was the appearance now made by forces moving across the Kalmuk Steppes in a southerly direction. Lastly, the forces in the south-eastern Caucasus suddenly seemed to spring to life once more.

On January 1 the chief town on the Kalmuk Steppes,

Elista, was recaptured. Some savage fighting took place along the gullies that are a feature of the country in this region and later again on the confines of the city. Yet this availed the Germans very little. The city was next attacked from either flank, whereupon some Soviet troops were able to penetrate into the streets, which were cleared after a brief but bloody struggle.

Two days later, in the Caucasus, the Red Army succeeded by a surprise march in overwhelming the Germans at Mozdok and in occupying this town as well as Malgobek. On January 4 Nalchik was also taken by the victors of the Mozdok fighting. So the advance of the Russians went on. On January 5 Prokhladnaya was occupied after a specially violent encounter. Still more important was the capture of Tsymlyanskaya on the Lower Don.

It would be tedious to continue the enumeration of these captured localities. The Germans were clearly in retreat, and, moreover, in such haste to reach a safer district that their work of destruction, usually so marked a feature of any of their withdrawals, was not by any means as wide-spread or as complete as usual. So the Russians were able to profit from their good fortune. First on one front then on another, their progress and list of captured towns grew apace.

Finally in front of Stalingrad the plight of the German Sixth Army was daily growing more desperate. The Russians well knew the straits to which shortage of food was beginning to drive the Germans. Cavalry and other horses had long formed part of the German soldier's ration. Soon any dead horse that had foundered within range of Russian and German snipers might become the focus of a bitter struggle, Germans trying to creep up to the carcass to obtain an extra ration for their pot: Russians doing their best to pick off the German foragers.

By the middle of January the Russian offensives had assumed a definite pattern. Two movements of the first magnitude were outlined. On the northern front the capture of Velikye Luki had been supplemented by a further thrust on an 80 mile front made due west

from Moscow. This double attack was now threatening to pinch out the German salient which was marked by the "hedgehog" of Rzhev. In the south the Russians were steadily converging from about four directions along a front that now measured some 500 miles on the bulge the Germans had forced into the Central Caucasus. On the right of this great arc stood the armies of the Middle Don, now engaged in reducing the important German centre of Millerovo. To their left came the Russian armies that had recently defeated the German counter-thrust, planned to relieve their Sixth Army at Stalingrad, in the vicinity of Kotelnikovo. Next on the left of the latter was advancing a smaller force across the Kalmuk steppes: to these troops there had just fallen the German base of Elista. On the extreme left the Russian armies that had been fighting round Mozdok and Malchik were pressing on due westward, having now cleared Georgievsk. Meanwhile near Stalingrad the situation of the German Sixth Army could only be described as hopeless. The sole consolation which the German High Command could derive from any further resistance of the Sixth Army was the fact that its surviving forces were blocking the railways running through the Stalingrad junction. But the true danger to the Germans might be found in the diminishing neck of the sack represented by the course of the lower Don down to its mouth in the Sea of Azov below Rostov, for this gap was now no more than 60 miles in width.

Whatever the German *communiqués* might still publish, and whatever the German radio commentators might proclaim, the German High Command had by now assessed the situation aright. There was but one method by which the wreckage of the great offensive of 1942 might be salvaged: this was instant retreat from the Caucasian area, together with an abandonment of the whole valley of the River Don. Where, how and in what strength a stand might or could be made to oppose all further Russian progress beyond the Caucasian area, this indeed was clearly a matter that must depend on the course of events which might occur along the valley of

the Don at and above the area of Millerovo and Rossosh. In the meantime it was urgent to assemble the entire badly scattered German forces somewhere to the south of the River Donetz, there to await developments. To that end all else was subordinated and a speedy retreat was ordered from the whole region south and east of the Don. The Sixth Army at Stalingrad could only be left to its fate, which indeed had already been sealed by the German failure at Kotelnikovo.

The German forces assembling with all possible speed in the River Donetz area were now reinforced, as far as could be done with safety, by withdrawing troops from the Crimea. These may have been supplemented by such forces as could be withdrawn from the extreme western Caucasus by sea. Finally, reinforcing divisions were summoned hastily from the remainder of the Eastern Front, to be replaced from France and elsewhere in occupied Europe. But the total of the latter arrivals can never have been very great, nor would such have been very formidable in the matter of their quality nor by reason of their heavier armament. If twelve divisions could be scraped together to reinforce the retreating Caucasian remnants, this was all. The whole was under the orders of General von Manstein, the unsuccessful commander of the Kotelnikovo attacks made to relieve the Sixth Army surrounded at Stalingrad. But neither the actual situation nor the completeness of his army could hold out any hopes to von Manstein to take the field there and then against the advancing Russians. He must wait for his Caucasian troops to arrive, and to refit. Consequently as these German forces were now retreating in all haste from their highly dangerous position, so the Russians might find it easier to make rapid progress westwards. The main preoccupation of von Manstein must therefore be centred on a continuation of the German resistance along the front from the River Don as far north-westward as Orel. In particular much depended on the resistance which the important "hedgehog" of Millerovo, situated at an all-important railway-junction, might offer to the Russians.

At this juncture, on January 18, another event which caused rejoicing throughout the Soviet Union was announced: the raising of the siege of Leningrad. Although such an event had for some little time been mentioned as likely, not much beyond the following narrative has even now been made known of the event.

For nearly 500 days all the overland communications of Leningrad with the rest of Russia had been cut. On its approaches a quarter of a million Germans and Finns and members of the units of other satellite nations are estimated to have died. In the city itself the Russian death-roll from hunger and exposure had been very high; if published it would appal the world.

The piercing of the German investment was the result of a combined operation by units under the command of Colonel-General Govorov, who since last spring had been commander of the Leningrad garrison, and General Meretskov, who had frustrated the Germans' attempt to drive a corridor south of Lake Lagoda linking the German concentration before Leningrad with the German-Finnish forces on the River Svir front to the north.

As the pale sun rose beyond the frozen Neva on the morning of Tuesday, January 12, Russian artillery, massed in unprecedented density, opened a barrage on a front of about ten miles. It continued for nearly two and a half hours. At 11.30 infantrymen equipped with climbing irons slid down the northern bank of the Neva.

The fortifications were as tough as German military skill could devise. Schlüsselburg was protected by a number of concrete forts. Along the railway line that runs from there to Mga every station and workers' settlement was a formidable obstacle.

The southern banks of the Neva rise steeply in most places, and the surface was coated with ice and hard-beaten snow. As the Russians crossed the river German shell-fire tore up the surface, throwing deadly slivers of ice into the air. But in less than ten minutes the first wave of Russian infantry, armed with automatic rifles, had secured a lodgment on the southern bank. Close on

¹ Adapted from *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian*.

their heels came the second wave, pushing field artillery, which was hoisted by rope up the banks, and the battle was carried into the minefields, traversed with barbed-wire defences, on the approaches of riverside villages.

Meanwhile the heavy guns of Schlüsselburg fortress, on the north bank of the Neva, which the Red fleet had held for 16 months though its only means of approach was by small boats under cover of darkness, kept up a pounding of a ten-mile belt of enemy-held territory



LENINGRAD RELIEVED

between Govorov's and Meretskov's armies. The latter group was already on the move and large forces were crossing the frozen Ladoga to attack the enemy's coastal positions.

The issue of the battle on the banks of the Neva lay in doubt throughout the early part of Tuesday afternoon, but under the pressure of heavy tanks which the Russians had now brought across the river by pontoons over the ice, deadly low-flying attacks by aircraft, and the relentless push of infantry, the Germans were slowly driven back to the edge of the forest. The battle then moved into a region of broken, roadless ground, with clearings

where in the summer peat had been cut and with fairly dense pine trees in whose branches German "cuckoo" snipers were hidden. Heavy tanks, produced by that part of the Kirov tank factory which remained in the besieged city, pursued the enemy through this region, and on the second day Govorov's men had advanced over three miles.

On the Volkhov front General Meretskov had already succeeded in punching his way to Ladoga Lake and harassing the Germans' flank, pushing southwards towards Sinyavino and splitting the German belt asunder. From the east another force delivered a series of powerful and unsparing frontal attacks. Most embittered resistance was encountered in all sectors, but after a seven-day battle, in which the enemy lost over 14,000 men in killed and prisoners and a great quantity of guns, the Russians had established a corridor of about ten miles in breadth and driven the enemy back from positions he had held for 16 months on Lake Ladoga's shores.

It was time ; for the sufferings of Leningrad had been acute. Bombardment from long-range guns as well as aircraft had been constant, yet they had never crushed the spirit of the population. Even in December 1941, when a cold spell hit Leningrad so hard and so suddenly that birds dropped dead on the wing—even then the flow of arms and ammunition to the front from the city's great and historic armament works never ceased. But German bombing and, more especially, the appalling transport difficulties brought the city to the verge of famine. Those were the days before the great ice highway across Lake Ladoga was built in February 1942, and when later Douglas-type 'planes began to fly provisions into the beleaguered city.

Those were the days when people were dragged dead through the streets on sledges, the days when workers arriving at factories fell into a coma on the floor by their benches ; when it was not rare for someone telephoning to hear a voice falter and cease and to find out afterwards that the speaker had fallen dead ; when, save for the sound of battle, the city's life was stilled, and the

streets, festooned with tangled wires (the Germans dropped pieces of rail to cut them), littered with broken glass and deep in uncleared snow, were scenes of desolation. There was little fuel, and no glass in the windows, which had to be stuffed with pillows and sacks.

But in these days, too, Leningrad showed its fighting spirit, and turned fiercely on the handful of defeatists and traitors who furtively began to prepare for a German parachute division, remnants of the Cretan parachutists, who were expected to launch an attack on the city. It sent thousands of workers to the front, replacing them with women, who worked furnaces and lathes under shell fire in the industrial suburbs. But now privations and sufferings were all forgotten.

The relief of Leningrad could not exert very great influence on the course of the war; but the cumulative effect of all these events on the mind of the German public was considerable. The well-known radio spokesman, General Dietmar, had recourse to the weightiest arguments:

"there could no longer exist any doubt as to the dimensions of the Soviet offensive. The attacks of the Soviet troops are much more concentrated than they were last year. Violent fighting continues in the Don bend and in the Caucasus and the end is not in sight. We face a huge offensive by the Soviet troops, effected by means of vast concentration of forces. . . . Now, just as last year, the Soviet Command chose for its offensive an opportune moment when the German troops were in a state of decline after the moral and physical exertion demanded of them by the summer battles." He excused the German failures by stating that the German troops had had no time to construct sufficiently strong defences in the rear between the Don and the Volga. "Even Frederick the Great," he pleaded, "a past master in the struggle against a huge superiority of enemy forces, stressed in his writings that an excessive superiority of enemy troops precludes the victory of the best of armies." He ended with a vague statement that "the German troops were drawing back to new lines of defence."

Goebbels himself, writing in *Das Reich*, could only say:

"Inasmuch as it is impossible to lessen the burden on the active army, it is necessary to increase the burden borne by the population in the rear." What that burden might be he did not say. Yet just before Christmas he had in one of his pronouncements been forced to admit that the war had caused "wide gaps in the German people. There are families whose male members have all perished. The family itself is in danger of extinction."

The German Army was indeed faced with a grave shortage of man-power. That problem was not likely to be eased by the tragedy that was being enacted before Stalingrad, a tragedy, moreover, which must end not only in the destruction of a German army but also in the release of further Russian forces to take part in the westward drive.

During the past few weeks, by systematic air bombing, powerful artillery fire and infantry attacks, the Russian troops had destroyed a large number of officers and men of the encircled enemy. In addition, being cut off from their food supply, the surrounded German troops were in a disastrous plight. The surrounded German soldier only received 100 to 150 grammes of bread ($3\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 oz.) a day. A number of the surrounded units had already eaten all the carcasses of their dead horses. The attempt of the German High Command to bring food to their troops by means of transport planes had been a failure. Between November 19 and January 10 over 600 transport planes were shot down near Stalingrad.

Epidemics were spreading among the German soldiers as the result of starvation and exhaustion. The field hospitals had been unable to accommodate all the wounded and sick. In addition, the German soldiers at Stalingrad had no winter clothing. The number of deaths from frostbite was growing day by day. According to prisoners, 400 to 500 soldiers died daily as a result of sheer exhaustion or were frozen to death in the field. Altogether, the German troops surrounded at Stalingrad were losing at least 1,500 men a day.

On January 8, 1943, in order to avoid unnecessary bloodshed, the High Command of the Red Army presented the following ultimatum to the Command and to all officers and the rank and file of the German troops surrounded at Stalingrad :

"To the Commander of the 6th German Army, Colonel-General Paulus, or his second-in-command and to all the officers and rank and file of the surrounded German troops at Stalingrad :

The 6th German Army, formations of the 4th Tank Army and the reinforcements sent them have been completely encircled since November 23, 1942. Red Army units have drawn a tight ring around this grouping of the German troops. All hopes for the rescue of your troops by a German offensive from the south and south-west have fallen through. The German troops which hastened to your assistance have been routed by Red Army units and the remnants of these troops are retreating towards Rostov.

In view of the successful and rapid offensive of the Red Army the German transport aviation which supplied you with miserable quantities of food, ammunition and fuel is frequently compelled to change its aerodromes and cover longer distances to reach the positions of the surrounded troops. Moreover, the German transport aviation suffers tremendous losses in planes and crews as a result of the operations of the Russian Air Force. Its aid to the surrounded troops is becoming impracticable.

The position of your encircled troops is desperate, they are experiencing hunger, disease and cold. The severe Russian winter is only just beginning. The bitter frosts, the cold biting winds and the snowstorms have yet to come. Your men have not been supplied with winter uniforms and live in appalling, unhygienic conditions. You, as the commander, and all officers of the surrounded troops realize full well that you have no real possibilities of breaking the ring of encirclement. Your situation is hopeless. Further resistance is useless.

In the hopeless situation with which you are confronted, in order to avoid unnecessary bloodshed we offer you the following terms of surrender: (1) All the surrounded German troops, headed by you and your staff, are to cease resistance; (2) you are to place at our disposal in organized fashion all personnel, arms, fighting equipment and war material in good order.

We guarantee to all officers and men who cease resistance their lives and safety, and after the end of the war repatriation to Germany or to any other country as desired by the war prisoner. All the personnel of the surrendering troops are to retain their uniforms, insignia and orders, personal belongings and valuables, while the higher ranks are to retain their swords. All officers, N.C.O.s and privates surrendering will immediately be provided with normal food. All the wounded, sick and frost-bitten will be given medical assistance.

If you reject our proposals for your surrender we warn you that the Red Army troops and the Red Air Force will be compelled to proceed with the annihilation of the surrounded German troops, and yours will be the responsibility for their annihilation."

The Command of the German troops rejected the ultimatum of the Soviet Command. Consequently, on January 10 the Russian troops commenced a general attack against the German troops surrounded at Stalingrad. In seven days of violent fighting, ever tightening the ring around the Germans, the Russians advanced in certain directions from 12 to 22 miles and captured important strong-points of the enemy defence line. Nothing could now save them.

The rest of the story may be told here, although it may be out of its correct sequence of time. Between November 23 and January 10 the German troops surrounded near Stalingrad had lost about 140,000 men from artillery fire, bombing from the air, attacks of ground troops and

also from hunger, frost and disease. Thus, by the time the general offensive commenced on January 10, 1943, the German troops surrounded near Stalingrad numbered about 190,000 officers and men, including reinforcing units, engineering units, police troops and rear establishments. Between January 27 and 31 a further 18,000 officers and men were taken prisoner, thus bringing up the total number of prisoners to 46,000. Thus well over 140,000 men were killed or died from various causes between January 10 and 30.

On January 31 the survivors surrendered. The captives included Field-Marshal von Paulus and fifteen general officers. The dramatic scene then enacted has been described as follows :

A snowstorm had been raging all night. From Stalingrad came crowds of lean, frost-bitten German soldiers and officers who had surrendered, the remains of the encircled German divisions.

In the dugout of a divisional commander there was literally no room to move. The place was packed with German officers of all ranks who had surrendered or been captured. The adjutant reported that a lieutenant-colonel had arrived from the 297th German Division, which wished to surrender.

After the preliminary parleys, a Red Army colonel proceeded to a school building in the city to await the arrival of General von Drebbler and his staff. The colonel knew the 297th Division well. He knew the names of its officers and their fighting capacities. He had fought against this division last year.

It was 2 a.m. when General von Drebbler made his appearance, together with his staff and the remaining officers of his division. He was asked : "Where are your regiments, your soldiers ?"

General von Drebbler made a wry face and said : "Surely I don't have to tell you where my regiments are. All those who remain alive are now in your hands, colonel. I gave the order that all my soldiers were to lay down their arms, but they had already done this much earlier."

Then, "How old are you ?" he asked the Soviet colonel. "I am 35 years of age," replied the colonel.

"So young ! And yet you were able to defeat a division of a German general. I am the first general to surrender to you near Stalingrad."

"The first German general to surrender to the Russians," retorted the colonel, "but not the last."

"Yes," replied von Drebbler, "not the last. I must tell you that from the moment we found ourselves in the Stalingrad ring many of our generals thought it senseless and criminal to continue further resistance."

The German surrender at Stalingrad was indeed a bitter blow to the German Army. But the German propaganda service made the most of the episode. It was repeated to satiety that the protracted resistance of

the Sixth Army had saved the German forces by gaining time for them to withdraw elsewhere. Accordingly the men of Stalingrad were no longer heroes; they were acclaimed as saints. Funeral marches were played on the radio: all the talents of Nazi showmanship were given free play in order to glorify the men and to extol their sacrifice to the holy cause of Fatherland. Everything was done, in short, to divert the thoughts of the German nation from the inescapable fact that their Sixth Army had been sacrificed in an insensate attempt of Nazi megalomania to achieve a task that lay beyond its strength: in other words, a mad gamble to encompass success.

Whilst this great drama was running its course near Stalingrad and well to the rear of the actual fighting front, another Russian offensive of considerable importance had been initiated already before the middle of January. Between the 13th and 20th of that month, along the upper course of the River Don, southwards from Voronezh, the Russians had driven forward, first westwards from Svoboda and then south-westwards from below Rossosh. As yet nothing definite was heard of the progress of this momentous movement until the Russian *communiqué* of January 19 revealed the full scope of the manoeuvre. On the above-named date the important railway centre of Valuiki had been captured, while enemy troops standing to the east of the railway line Rossosh-Kamenka were surrounded. By this date, too, the Russians claimed to have taken 52,000 prisoners, in addition to the infliction of casualties of other natures in this new offensive. The striking feature of their claim is the fact that it was said to include no less than 27,000 Hungarians and 22,000 Italians. Here was yet further proof that the Germans for many months past had been covering the entire left flank of the communications of their armies advancing to Stalingrad and into the Caucasian region with their satellite divisions, a weakness for which they were now to pay dearly. This whole flank, from Stalingrad as far back as Voronezh, had been covered by between 40 and 50 "allied" divisions, and

there was now hardly one remaining intact. Twenty-two Rumanian divisions, ten Italian divisions, thirteen Hungarian divisions, and one Slovak division—all these had now been all but accounted for, and that was only one aspect of these startling Russian successes. In the first stages of the Don battle, that is, during the first forcing of the river line above Stalingrad, ten Rumanian divisions had been virtually squeezed out of existence. Two more were slowly being crushed at Stalingrad itself; five more had been utterly routed at Kotelnikovo. At Nalchik, in the Caucasus, many Hungarian troops and one Italian Rifle Division were being heavily punished in the Russian advance. Now, at length, round Voronezh at least ten of the Hungarian divisions and four more Italian divisions had been pulverized. This meant that the German army had lost over 750,000 "satellite" troops; and even this total does not include the heavy Rumanian casualties incurred in the earlier southern campaigns at Odessa, at Sebastopol, and in the more recent Stalingrad fighting.

Nevertheless, the most serious effect of these losses to the Germans, at any rate, lay in the necessity that was now felt of making good the deficiencies almost wholly from German and not allied sources. In addition, losses of war material during the first two months of the Russian winter had also been mounting up at an alarming rate. In the course of their defeat of no less than 60 enemy divisions, the Russians had deprived the Germans of at least 190 aeroplane squadrons, 63 tank battalions, 48,000 mortars, machine-guns and field pieces, with 15,000,000 rounds of ammunition and shells and 500 store dumps.

And these figures were shortly to be augmented by the surrender of the Sixth Army at Stalingrad. Here was a replacement problem of the first magnitude, bearing in mind that other fronts had to be supplied also. The rate of loss was certainly far greater than that of production.

These events did not fail to exert grave repercussions in the industrial field in Germany itself. The winter of 1942-43 should have been a period of recuperation in

German war manufactories. But now for the second year in succession all hope of realizing this sorely needed period of respite was shattered. The situation of German war-production was thus growing acute. The warfare of the year 1942 had been supported very largely by the output that could be squeezed out of the occupied countries and from stocks of material that had there been appropriated. Such sources, however, were beginning to dry up, whilst at the same moment the heavy drain on German man-power occasioned by the unforeseen losses incurred on the Eastern Front was gravely affecting the output of the German factories. Hence the unprecedented efforts that were now made to enlist yet a further supply of foreign workers for manning German war factories. Nevertheless, although to a great measure successful in finding a considerable number of labourers for work in Germany, two grave disadvantages to such impressment were soon to make themselves felt. In the first place, all this compulsory labour was showing less willingness to work; in the second place, the lack of skilled workers was hampering output in the factories and still more the quality of that output. It may be assumed that the minimum ratio of skilled to unskilled workers in factories may lie between 12 per cent to 20 per cent. Even this ratio was seriously declining.

To this cause might be ascribed the repeated summons that were now addressed to France to furnish the skilled labour which could no longer be found in Germany itself. The need was pressing and so, in spite of the scuttling of the French Navy and of the events taking place in Algeria, Hitler could declare himself to be "more than ever ready to collaborate with the legal government of France." France, indeed, had not yet been bled white in the Russian campaign. Italy had her own wars to feed and her own garrisons to supply for the repression of Balkan unrest. Except Bulgaria, which the Germans had, perforce, to leave on guard to watch for any Turkish aggression, France was virtually the only source from which Germany could replenish her wasting resources of skilled man-power.

In the meantime the actual military situation of the German armies in South Russia was not rendered any easier by the surrender of that important "hedgehog," Millerovo, on January 17. Combined with the new Russian advance coming across the Upper Don valley, it could not fail to cause General von Manstein the gravest preoccupation in his attempts to collect a new army in the Donetz Basin in order to check the Russian progress. Up till that moment the chief threat of the Russian offensive had lain in the possibility of its reaching Rostov and thereby cutting off the troops laboriously withdrawing from the Caucasus. But now a new danger was growing insistent, namely, that the new Russian threat was aimed at reaching the apex of the eastward bend of the River Dnieper. Should such an event really materialize, the German Command in the Donetz Basin must find itself cut off from all communication with the west, except for such precarious and inadequate methods of supply as might remain open across the River Dnieper below Dnepropetrovsk or else by sea : this was, indeed, an alarming prospect. The Russians were playing for very high stakes. Should they reach Dnepropetrovsk the possibility existed that the entire German armies in Southern Russia might be cut off much as was actually the case with the Sixth Army at Stalingrad.

Yet still more anxious must the whole position have appeared at this moment to the German High Command. For by now it was clear that the Russians were on the offensive at several points simultaneously : at Velikye Luki, at Rzhev, from Voronezh along the entire 600-700 mile front as far as the Caucasus. The Germans were being pressed, and pressed so hard that not the remotest prospect existed of their being allowed breathing space in which to move reserve troops to any one threatened sector without running unjustifiable risks. Moreover, in view of the huge distances involved and of the unsatisfactory existing systems of communications there would be no time to carry out any such movements. All that the German High Command could do was to hold out wherever they might be able to do so and to trust that

Von Manstein might be able to extricate his southern army from a most ugly situation.

The Russian advance along the entire Eastern Front during the following three weeks, that is, from the third week of January until the middle of February, conformed to a general strategic plan, and also to a general pattern on the ground. The Germans in the north, their allies along the whole middle of the River Don, the Germans, once more, in the Caucasian area, were all being surely thrust back. The rate of this far-flung Russian advance naturally varied, for it was dictated principally by the manner of the German retreat. On the Caucasian fronts, at any rate, the latter was proceeding with all speed; along the centre front the German resistance varied and, consequently, so did the Russian progress; in the north, on the other hand, every yard of ground appears to have been contested with varying success. The weather and the climate may have caused many variations in the rate of the Russian advance.

It would be difficult and even unsatisfactory to attempt to give any detailed account of the progress of the separate Russian columns. It is preferable to relate their movements over the southern part of the great front, at least, as one episode and to regard the Russian movements as one great concentric effort designed to drive the Germans westward; as one, moreover, which also aimed at cutting off appreciable parts of their forces in the course of that process.

After the middle of January the German resistance seemed to harden, chiefly round Velikye Luki, where frantic efforts were made to recapture the place. Possibly the increasing cold may have contributed to the failure of these attempts. Elsewhere there was little durable opposition to the Russian forward movements. In the Caucasus on January 20 the Russians were able to cross the River Manich with ease on a wide front, to capture the important railway centre of Salsk lying some 100 miles east of Rostov. Close by, the town of Proletarsk fell only after a three-day struggle. Along the Donetz

Valley the Russians were now entering the coal-mining and industrial district; progress was consequently growing slower. Further north-westwards towards Voronezh, the German-Hungarian-Italian resistance diminished palpably and finally collapsed. In the Caucasus again, on January 24, Armavir, the railway and oil-refining centre, was recovered by a bold sweep from the north-east by which a considerable capture of German war material was made.

The threat to Rostov was steadily growing, as the Russians drove southwards from Salsk, intent on cutting off the Germans who were rapidly retreating from Armavir. The fighting on the lower River Don then became more stubborn as the Germans made strenuous efforts to prevent the neck of the Caucasian "sack" from being closed before their troops had evacuated from the whole Caucasian area. This same threat was driving them more and more to split their forces in the Caucasus into two portions: the first to withdraw on Rostov, the second to retreat into the western Caucasian peninsula which separates the Sea of Azov from the Black Sea. The Germans showed every resolve to maintain their hold on the seaport of Novorossisk.

This decision of the Germans to split their forces in the Caucasus into two forces—one to retreat on Rostov, the other to the Kuban peninsula—grew more pronounced as February approached. Yet it is difficult to see how they could have acted otherwise. It is clear that all thoughts of a mass evacuation of their entire Caucasian army across the Straits of Kertch westwards from the Kuban district could never be realized. Consequently, if they elected to withdraw to the peninsula, it could only be with the intention of forming an entrenched camp or "hedgehog" wherein to withdraw as much heavy material as might prove practicable.

By the beginning of February the Russian advance had so far prospered that their troops had seized the whole of the Moscow-Rostov main line of railway from the important junction of Kastornaya, lying 40 miles west of Voronezh, down past Valuiki and Voroshilovgrad

through the heart of the Donetz industrial district as far as Likhaya junction that lay 60 miles north of Rostov itself. To the east of the River Don in the western Caucasus the important centres of Tikhoretsk, Kropotkin and the oilfield of Maikop were now in their hands. Everywhere except in the Donetz region their progress had been rapid ; but in that latter district the Germans had been more stubborn in their opposition to the Russians, an earnest maybe of what was to come.

The entire Russian counter-offensive now showed plainly that on every front the German strategy had failed. In the mountainous districts of the Caucasus the Germans had, once again, embarked on a more ambitious policy than their numerical superiority should have allowed them to do. By attempting to defend all their advanced positions among the higher valleys, they had invited the Russians, thanks to their greater numbers, to encircle them, or at any rate to outflank them, piecemeal. Elsewhere, too, there seemed to be no end to the difficulties of the Germans. From the Caucasus along the entire Don bend, before Voronezh, Rzhev and Velikye Luki, the same tale was repeated. All along their gigantic front, inadequate numbers and the typically Nazi conception of retaining every yard of ground that had been won, both these factors, contributed to the slow crumbling of the defence. There was but one hope left : von Manstein's gathering army in the Donetz basin. Everywhere else the German High Command could do little more than hold on grimly to their greater "hedgehogs" ; and even in their case the fate of Velikye Luki had shown that the Russians were now capable of overpowering even such strong defences.

The course of this winter campaign had further shown to the Germans how far the Russians had profited from their experience. The ease and rapidity with which they carried out movements over the snow was remarkable. The Russian infantry divisions now seemed able to manœuvre on skis or snowshoes ; their tanks and transport had developed a new capacity for working over the snow. Russian strategists and armament constructors

had indeed had their say in the surprise of the Germans, both at Stalingrad and elsewhere. The task now lay more with the fighting troops under their new-found and newly-proved leaders. In this respect, also, it seemed as though the Germans had been effectually surprised. The German tactics were beginning to prove inadequate. Their "hedgehogs" were crumbling under the blows of the Russian artillery. Their garrisons, provisioned for months, were being overwhelmed in a matter of days. Convoys of valuable material, being directed westwards, were repeatedly cut off by enterprising columns of mobile artillery, ski-troops and Cossack cavalry. The Russian superiority in this winter warfare was growing more and more marked.

In no respect was the change that was coming over the practice of warfare on the Eastern Front more plainly seen than in the matter of the use of the armoured formation. At the outset of the war the German tank formations were employed in what almost could be termed "a cavalry role," that is, when judged by standards of the campaigns of the past. Their effectiveness has depended ultimately on their power in shock action combined with their capacity for a deep penetration into the enemy's lines. At first the Russian tanks, although not numerically inferior, had proved weaker in fighting value to the German machines. This was particularly the case in regard to the German Mark V machine, which was better armoured and more heavily armed than their Russian opponents. The Russian armoured units had consequently evolved methods of "hide and seek" warfare which depended on flank attack and surprise action out of camouflaged positions. It was the application of the hunter's instinct to problems of war.

In the meantime, the German tanks had grown yet larger and better armed. Then, of a sudden, the tanks which were beginning to appear on the Russian side in this winter campaign were of quite new design, larger, more heavily armoured and armed than anything Russia had hitherto been able to put into the field. Even then, the German critics sought to comfort their audience with

the repetition of the theory that even if the Russians might be able to place more powerful machines in the field, they would never be able to make good their lack of experience and natural inadaptability to mechanized war. The Russian "can only stand and die in his place" was a frequent German comment.

"That," wrote the military critic, Soldan, "is the inexorable law, born of hard necessity, to which the Soviet High Command must bow." And he went on to scourge the Anglo-Saxons in his condemnation. "They can only compensate this innate inferiority of their human material by a concentration of machine-power. This phenomenon, now visible among the Bolsheviks, had already been noted among our western enemies. In July, 1917, the British had massed some 250 guns to the mile in Flanders; in October, 1917, the French had even improved upon that figure on the Chemin des Dames. Even so, they could not attain victory. To-day the problem has grown yet more difficult of solution. It is always easy to crush any given sector of front by weight of metal. But a mobile attack conducted with tanks and aircraft requires the highest form of military capacity . . . alertness, quickness of mind, the gift to deal a heavy, sudden stroke . . . the power of a modern armament can only be developed where these mental aptitudes exist. Now the Russian does not possess them and will never develop them; indeed, these aptitudes depend on racial heredity and will never be replaced by an animal-like contempt of death."¹

In spite of such pronouncements, here were the Russians now teaching the Germans some bitter lessons in the whole art of war. More particularly in regard to these very same mechanized tactics in the depth of winter. Not only the Russian evolution of more powerful types of tanks surprised the Germans, but the methods of their employment had come as a shock to them. The Russian tank seemed now to be used more according to the principles of "artillery" rather than of "cavalry" warfare. Rapid changes of target, overwhelming concentrations of fire, these were eventually features that marked the handling of the new Russian tanks. They proved a highly successful riposte to the headlong thrusts of both the earlier German tank tactics, and the later methods of *Mot-Pulk*, the "armoured square" already described in a previous Quarter.

During the first fortnight of February, the Russian progress continued unchecked. By February 3 the railway line running from Orel to Kursk had been cut.

¹ *Völkischer Beobachter*, 16. I. 43.

Next day Russian reports could claim that the German forces still surviving to the west of Voronezh had been broken up and were being destroyed piecemeal. Since January 27 not less than 27,000 Germans and allies had been captured on this front, while 17,000 had been killed. On February 7 the town of Kursk was occupied. Two days later the Red Army entered Byelgorod. Further progress was also being made in the district of Orel but here the fighting which developed in this highly fortified area was slower and laborious. To the south, in the Donetz basin, further advances, if less remarkable, were next recorded the German resistance was growing somewhat more marked. Nevertheless, Volchansk and the important railway junction of Kupiansk were occupied; and these points now threatened Kharkov city. Next Likhaya junction fell, and this event was straightway followed by the occupation of Rostov, this being the fourth time that the great city had been taken by force of arms in eighteen months. Then to the south of Rostov the German resistance began crumbling very rapidly. On February 6 Yeisk was in Russian hands and four days later they had taken the whole coast line of the Sea of Azov as far south as Primorsk-Akhtarskaya. On February 12 the Russians entered Krasnodar and so the Germans were now confined to the Taman peninsula, including an uncertain hold on the port of Novorossisk. This brilliant period of Russian success closed on February 16 with the seizure of Kharkov itself.

Progress continued to be made after this date, but the German resistance in the Donetz basin was slowly hardening. Heavy counter-attacks were made by the Germans for the obvious purpose of capturing Lozovaya, Krasnoarmeisk and Kramatorskaya. In fact, the Germans were disclosing their intention of defeating the whole Russian plan of surrounding their troops in the Donetz basin. Consequently, the most marked Russian advance now took place in the northern sector, south-east of Lake Ilmen, between the Lake and the Valdai Hills. Here the Russians finally defeated their old opponents,

the German Sixteenth Army, capturing Demyansk and clearing the Germans out of a roughly semicircular region of nearly 1,000 square miles. In the centre progress was growing slower, though still being methodical. On February 23 it was stated in Moscow that the entire Kharkov area was in Russian hands and that from Sumi to Pavlograd the Red Army was advancing on a front of 180 miles.

The Russian advance further east, at Pavlograd, and their capture of Krasnoarmeisk now began to menace the entire German position round Stalino and Gorlovka. Their capture of Slavyansk on February 17 drove home the threat. By February 19 the Germans were reacting very strongly since their armies could not afford to allow the Russians to close further in on them to the west. Accordingly, violent fighting set in throughout the industrial area of the Donetz. By February 21 the Russians had made some headway along the river but their gains were dearly bought. The Germans were next concentrating their heaviest stroke against the Russians near Krasnoarmeisk and Artemovsk. By February 23 heavy tank fighting was reported as taking place between Krasnoarmeisk and Stalino. It was soon clear that the true German objective was Kramatorskaya. By their attacks at this point they were seeking to split the Russian armies. On February 24 and 25 the Germans were still attacking with great fury, but although losing over 1,000 tanks, they made little headway. The struggle continued unabated until the end of the month on this scale and with intense determination.

By now the Germans were unquestionably beginning to win back lost ground. During January their *communiqués* had been content to speak of battles "with varying results"; they would go so far as to admit "heavy swaying battles." If a Russian break-through were admitted, it would be qualified by the claim that the enemy troops had subsequently been destroyed in detail. The loss of Rostov and Voroshilovgrad was first styled "an evacuation according to plan." Next it was said to be the beginning of a new planned retreat designed

to shorten the front. On the other hand, one radio commentator had admitted that Germany had "suffered a defeat without precedent in this war." In spite of it all, that irrepressible optimist, General Dietmar, in his broadcast, could say that

"we have space enough left for fighting—so much that there is practically no limit to our defence in depth. The present phase might be no more than a painful transition and the conquered spaces are now our weapon because they guarantee elbow-room for our elastic defence." He concluded, "Only gradually can we restore the balance by bringing up reserves."

But now the tone of the German pronouncements was returning somewhat to the accustomed grandiloquence of the past. The German counter-offensive was to a great extent succeeding. The reasons for the change of fortune were not far to seek. The characteristics of attack and defence had been reversed. The Russians had now been over three months on the offensive. Their consistent progress had been remarkable. The supply and maintenance of their immense forces spread over so vast a theatre had been the outcome of skilful and thorough planning. Railways had virtually never been used, for the lines had been destroyed by the enemy or blocked by the continued resistance as had happened at Stalingrad or to a lesser degree at Millerovo. The Russian progress had been based on motor transport, adapted to winter conditions where ice and snow prevailed. Now the Russians met with a great blow that blasted the high hopes they had formed for the outcome of their winter campaign. The winter months of early 1943 were abnormally mild and snowless—in sharp contrast to the conditions that had characterized the bitter season of 1942. Winter conditions vary greatly over the long Eastern Front. In the region of Moscow hard winter lasts 150 days, at Stalingrad 120 days, but at Odessa and in the Crimea no more than 60 days. Similarly, the depth of snow varies: to the north-east of the River Volga the average depth is 20 inches; 8 inches at Kharkov and in the Crimea; 4 inches at Odessa and Rostov. In the south the snow may begin to melt at any time after the beginning of March. At Leningrad it may last some weeks longer. These wintry conditions might thus begin

to break in the Donetz basin much earlier than 200 miles further north. Nevertheless it was really unusual that by the third week in February premonitory symptoms of an early spring should be making themselves felt along the River Donetz. By early March the Russian transport system began to be affected by the now prevalent bad snow conditions. The Germans, on the contrary, had been falling back on intact communications. They were profiting from the close railway system of the Donetz basin, the best and most intensely developed network of lines in Russia.

In addition it must be borne in mind that the Russians were now at the end of four months of arduous winter campaigning. It must be assumed therefore that the entire distribution of their troops and their administrative services were now showing gaps and deficiencies which must militate against their effective use in meeting any unforeseen German stroke. In particular, the possibility of moving any large formations of reserve troops after a hard winter's fighting would present formidable difficulties if, indeed, the supply of such troops might still be forthcoming. Further, the original disposal of the Russian reserve formations, designed as it was to meet the exigencies of great offensive movements scattered over a front extending over 1,000 miles might no longer be suitable to withstand a heavy German counter-stroke. Precisely at this moment the Russian forward movements encountered the most pronounced enemy resistance and the worst conditions of transport. In popular parlance, from March onwards the boot was on the other leg.

Whilst the weather and conditions, rendered difficult by spasmodic thaws, hampered the Russians in the south, similar obstacles did not exist on the northern and central fronts. The junction of Lgov, 50 miles west of Kursk, was thus easily captured by them on March 3. Far more important, however, was the fall of the great German "hedgehog" of Rzhev. This place, though all but surrounded, had defied all Russian attacks for many months. The triumph was real, deservedly if hardly earned.

The Russians were also attacking in three directions along the central sector : westwards towards another German "hedgehog," namely Gzhatsk, and southwards along two railway lines. On March 6 Gzhatsk was taken. Progress in all three directions brought Russian pressure to bear against yet another "hedgehog," this time Vyasma. On March 11 Vyasma fell. This success did not terminate the Russian advance, which continued slowly but surely in the direction of Smolensk.

To the south, in the Donetsk area matters had been taking quite an unfavourable turn. Struggling against a



THE KUBAN BRIDGEHEAD

heavy superiority of armour, the Russians fought their way back north most stubbornly. Their general withdrawal tended north-eastwards. Still they succeeded in foiling every German attempt to force the River Donetz at Izyum, the scene of von Bock's masterly stroke in June, 1942. The Germans, however, were now finding an opening to move against Kharkov. In this thrust they assembled the greatest weight of armour yet employed in a single mass during this whole war. Indeed, the Russians averred that they had collected a whole corps of *Waffen S.S.* divisions comprising no less than 1,000 tanks. In spite of its power, this force had failed to cross the Donetz and then turned north-westwards. On

March 13 the Germans drove a solid wedge of six divisions of *Waffen S.S.* into the western and north-western suburbs of Kharkov. On the 15th the city was evacuated by the Russians.

During the second part of March the fighting continued to be fiercely contested but provided no such spectacular nor decisive episodes as had hitherto marked the winter campaign. Russian reserves and fresh armoured formations were at length arriving. Some particularly obstinate actions were fought near Chuguyev. Lastly, in the Kuban area, round Novorossisk, the Russians once more claimed some slight if appreciable progress. The situation in this district then settled down to a relative state of stabilization.

The Germans throughout this period sought to make capital out of their successes, particularly out of the recapture of Kharkov. They admitted the loss of Rzhev, Vyasma and Gzhatsk but added that they experienced "no interference by the enemy" and claimed to have brought away all armament and stores. Everywhere else they claimed repeated defeats of the enemy "with stupendous losses." The campaign of von Manstein during February and March had indeed saved the German southern armies from complete catastrophe. The Germans, moreover, might justly point to a brilliant strategic coup that had brought them a fine success in the shape of the re-occupation of Kharkov and the southern banks of the River Donetz.

Nevertheless, the struggle was never quite so one-sided as this rough generalization would appear to warrant. The Germans were content to speak of "counter-attacks" and never of a counter-offensive—and this is significant. They owed much to climate. For as the thaw grew pronounced in the early days of March the difficulties of the Russian transport mounted apace. It was very largely due to the greater cold prevalent in the north that the Russians had been able to carry out their highly successful operations at Demyansk, Vyasma and Gzhatsk. But in the Donetz basin things had taken a very different turn. Von Manstein had collected no less than twelve armoured

divisions, twelve infantry divisions and one motorized division. These, after being fully reinforced and re-equipped had been set in motion. At least six of these divisions belonged to that formidable and select Nazi army known as the *Waffen S.S.*, all armoured divisions. The command of this menacing assemblage of tanks is believed to have been entrusted to the commander of the former German 1st Armoured Corps, Field-Marshal von Kleist. This force was proving superior in every respect to its Russian adversaries, who were by now finding themselves hampered by the thaw and slush that rendered their transport unsuitable. Above all, they were woefully inferior in armoured units.

Soon it had grown clear that, thanks to the pressure exerted by this force, the Germans in the Donetz basin were less exposed to being surrounded as seemed extremely possible only ten days earlier. The Crimea, too, was now secure in German hands. Even the Russian advance on Dnepropetrovsk was coming to a dead stop.

Nevertheless, as the first surprise of the German counter-attacks began to wear off and the Russians were able to fall back on their own supports and supply columns, the struggle had become more equal. Accordingly the Germans began to study the situation with greater deliberation and hit upon a strategic manoeuvre of no mean order. Still thrusting deeply into the thinly held Russian front between Kramatorskaya and Pavlograd, they detached a force of armoured divisions which pushed on boldly to the west of Kharkov until they reached the two obscure towns, Grasvoron and Akhtyrka. Then, turning east and south the whole force converged on to Kharkov. The Russians, then in the city, were rather weakly organized, the place had not been strengthened, it had remained little more than a station on a line of communications. Moreover, from a railway standpoint, it was wholly isolated, as none of the tracks laid on the Russian side had been converted back to the Russian gauge.

The whole operation was extremely bold. Of German reserves there were then virtually none left. All local

reserves which could still be maintained along the whole front were now engaged or immobilized by threats of Russian attacks. The German High Command were, therefore, banking on the season of the year and the Russian climate. So they staked everything on the success of this one great throw. They reckoned that it was too early for an invasion to strike their forces in Western Europe. In Africa they had reason to hope that von Arnim and Rommel might be able to stave off all danger of an Allied coup in the Mediterranean area. Consequently, all recruits undergoing training and all recovered wounded who could be utilized were sent to reinforce reserve divisions both on the Eastern Front and elsewhere with a view to making good the blanks caused by the withdrawals of fit divisions absorbed by the creation of von Manstein's Army. The results could be regarded as a foregone conclusion: to throw what was clearly an army composed of wholly fresh, or at least rested and re-equipped, formations against the Soviet forces, tired by four months' efforts and thinned by battle casualties, meant the obtainment of a vast initial advantage.

The results of this entire manoeuvre, daring and well planned as it was, were instantly felt. The Russian offensive came to a standstill, whilst the German forces on every sector of the Eastern Front received a respite and an encouragement that went a long way towards a recovery from the serious moral blows that had been dealt to them by the Russian winter successes.

Still, there was a limit set to the German victory. As their communications lengthened, as they moved further forward, so they began to suffer from those self-same difficulties that had hamstrung all further Russian progress. The spring thaw then dominated all transport movements. Finally there remained the capital fact that as fast as the Red Army withdrew, so it was slowly reinforced by fresh drafts and reserve formations: the Germans, on the other hand, having staked all their available troops on the success which they had now won were no longer able to maintain the momentum of their

victorious thrust. The German counter-offensive had spent itself. The only activity continuing on the River Donetz was the ceaseless bickering that began with a view to the possession of the bridge-heads that must be retained for the prosecution of future operations now that the frozen rivers could no longer be crossed over thick ice.

The success of von Manstein's operations is striking and supplies a typical instance of the Nazi theory of war, viz.:—that a violent blow dealt in concentrated form at one point of a long hostile front may immobilize the whole of the enemy's operations. As subsequent events have shown, such a widespread success will only come to pass if and when the enemy's High Command can be sufficiently disorganized, if not paralysed, by one single local enemy success. The Russians eventually reacted strongly to the risks of such demoralization.

CHAPTER IV

THE WAR IN THE WEST

I : ATLANTIC AND NORTH SEA

The long struggle with the U-boats continued with unabating determination on either side throughout the quarter. Little was known outside the Admiralty and the War Office, less was said and virtually nothing was published about its course in this country. The American and Canadian peoples were somewhat better informed and heard several public pronouncements that did not minimize the gravity of the situation. The seriousness of the U-boat threat was emphasized by Admiral Sir Percy Noble, head of the Admiralty delegation to the combined Chiefs of Staff at Washington, who spoke frankly to the American Press on January 20 :

It was a mistake, he said, to suppose that the U-boat menace was under control. Sinkings of both U-boats and merchantmen had been heavy, and unless the U-boat were beaten sea-power would be lost. The answer to the U-boat was the supply of an ever-increasing number of escort vessels, increased air patrolling of the oceans and the closest co-operation between the Allied navies and between surface craft and aircraft. On the same day Mr. Elmer Davis, head of the Office of War Information, revealed that more shipping had been destroyed by U-boats in the Atlantic in the first twenty days of January than in the same period of December, 1942.

The Germans claimed the destruction of sixty-three ships of the United Nations in January by U-boats, which had hit thirty-seven as well, but this figure included ships torpedoed in the Mediterranean. Eighteen ships, they asserted, had been destroyed by Axis aircraft in the Mediterranean. The total tonnage thus destroyed totalled 522,000 tons. They said that the diminution in sinkings was caused by rough weather in the Atlantic. These figures were believed to be exaggerated. Early in February it became known that four American ships, three medium-sized and one small, had been sunk off the northern coast of South America by a U-boat pack.

Of their crews twenty-eight were missing. On February 3 Mr. Alexander told Parliament that we had had periods of most heartening successes against the U-boats, but he returned a guarded reply to the question, put by Mr. Shinwell, whether we were sinking enemy submarines faster than they were being built. On February 5 Admiral Land, the U.S. War Shipping Administrator, in the course of a tribute to American merchant seamen, said that it was reported that the Germans were now "producing one submarine a day." This was a faster rate than that of our sinkings of U-boats. On February 8 Admiral Stark, Commander of the U.S. Naval forces in Europe, told a Press conference :

"You ask me if we have broken the back of the U-boat campaign? The answer is "No." I think Germany will continue to throw everything she has got into that campaign." He added there was a complete pooling of ideas with the Admiralty. New methods of beating the U-boat were always under review and he hoped for better results in the months to come, while the constant air attacks on German construction bases were very helpful.

The appearance of U-boats off the Cape led the South African Government to announce on February 10 that flotillas of seventy-five-ton patrol boats were operating to protect shipping in South African waters. The U-boats had been active on the Brazilian side of the South Atlantic in January and on January 21 Rear-Admiral Jonas Ingram, Chief of the U.S. naval forces in the South Atlantic, stated that five submarines had been sunk by ships of his command during the past thirty days. An enemy surface raider had been scuttled by her crew rather than face a fight with overwhelming forces during the same period. The Brazilian Air Force added a sixth to their list of sunk U-boats on January 21 when they planted a bomb on one near the mouth of the Rio Grande do Sul.

On February 22 the U.S. Navy Department announced the loss of over 850 persons, mostly members of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Coastguards, when two medium-sized passenger-cargo ships were torpedoed in the Atlantic early in February. Both ships were torpedoed at night and sank rapidly. Many of the victims were frozen to death in the lifeboats. On March 8, however, the

headquarters of the anti-submarine command of the U.S. Army air forces gave a more cheering account of the situation. He said that since September 9

"not a ship had been sunk by submarines in 1,000,000 square miles of Atlantic waters," which had been the operational area of the First Bomber Command. "The submarine war may be at a turning-point," he added, and he affirmed that the number of U-boats destroyed had been "very high."

Changes in the German naval commands had, meanwhile, made it clear that U-boat warfare would be prosecuted with the utmost vigour, and also that Hitler was dissatisfied with his elder Admirals. Admiral Dönitz had been appointed Commander-in-Chief *vice* Admiral Räder on January 30. This officer (who had commanded a submarine and had been made prisoner in the last war) was intensely confident of victory through unlimited submarine warfare, and was said to carry his affection for submarines to the point of detesting surface ships. Technically highly skilled, ruthless, determined, he was the natural choice of a Führer who regarded battleships and large cruisers as toys for "plutocratic" Governments and pinned his faith on aircraft and submarine. The subsequent changes, news of which reached London on March 6, showed the greater importance now attributed by the Germans to the Mediterranean, which they had previously regarded as the Italian's province. They were :

GROUP NORTH. Admiral Karls, an able and popular officer retired in favour of Vice-Admiral Kummetz who was expected to take charge of operations off Norway.

GROUP SOUTH. Admiral Schuster gave place to the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Fricke, an appointment that was expected to herald German use of the Italian Fleet.

NORWAY. Admiral Ciliac, who had brought the *Prinz Eugen*, *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* through the Channel on February 12 last year (q.v. *The Tenth Quarter*, pp. 24-27), succeeded Admiral Bohm.

DENMARK. Admiral Wurmbach, formerly captain of the *Tirpitz*, succeeded Admiral Mewis. The Commanders-in-Chief of the Baltic and North Sea stations were dismissed, but it was not known who would succeed them. Meanwhile the German Press had been busy "building-up" Dönitz, who was described as "a Rommel of the sea," and otherwise puffed.

The German official figures for U-boat sinkings of Allied merchantmen in February gave a total of eighty-

two ships totalling 543,300 tons. Fourteen more had been torpedoed and some of these "had surely sunk," three of 6,500 tons altogether had been sunk by E-boats and five of 25,000 tons by the *Luftwaffe*. The U-boats also claimed "a cruiser, a destroyer and three escort vessels." Surface ships and the *Luftwaffe* between them claimed two submarines, a supply ship and some small craft.

On March 11 information reached New York that eight Allied vessels had been sunk off the coast of French Guiana and on March 23 Vice-Admiral Sir William Tait, Commander-in-Chief the Africa Station, said that U-boats had been seen off all the South African coasts. Mr. Elmer David admitted losses in two U.S. convoys on the Atlantic passage in March, but said that the German claim to have sunk forty-seven ships was exaggerated. Answering a question doubtless suggested by this and similar claims, and made by Rear-Admiral Beamish in Parliament on March 26, Mr. Churchill said that all sorts of claims were made by German radio, and, he added

"They would very much like to know how far adrift they are from the truth. But nothing would induce me while I am responsible to do anything to clarify enemy knowledge on this matter. . . . I see the enemy making all sorts of absurd claims and I much prefer to leave him to his delusions rather than to give him accurate information to enable him to find out what success he has had, with which attacks, and which submarine commanders were telling the truth." The Prime Minister also stated that the United Nations had afloat a substantially larger fleet than they had at the worst moment of the U-boat war, and that this improvement was continuous.

Even allowing for German exaggerations which in the war of 1914-18 averaged 40 per cent above the truth, it was certain that shipping losses in March had been heavy. The enemy claims amounted to 138 ships with a total tonnage of 851,600 tons. The *Luftwaffe*, they averred, had sunk eleven ships. The enemy also claimed the destruction in March of three destroyers and eight submarines, which was certainly a gross exaggeration. Our losses in naval craft announced during the quarter were :

January. DESTROYERS : H.M.S. *Blean* (Lieut. M. Parker), *Firedrake* (Commander E. A. Tilden), and *Partridge* (Lieut-Commander W. A

Hawkins). CORVETTES : H.M.S. *Marigold* (Lieut. J. A. Halcrow) and *Snapdragon* (Commander H. C. Simms), and 3 trawlers.

February. CORVETTES : H.M.S. *Erica* (Temp. Lieut. A. C. Seligman) and *Samphire* (Lieut.-Commander F. T. Renny) and 3 trawlers.

March. DESTROYER : H.M.S. *Lightning* (Commander H. G. Walters). MINELAYER : H.M.S. *Welshman* (Captain W. H. Friedberger), with a trawler and two Norwegian ships, the minesweeper *Harstad* and the submarine *Uredd*.¹

¹ These losses, it should be noted, may include some incurred in the Mediterranean. They do not include losses of small surface craft in actions fought in or near British waters. Most of the submarines, perhaps all, lost during these periods, met their fate in the Mediterranean, and their names are recorded in Chapter II, Section 3.

Discussion of methods of combating the U-boat was frequent in the Press. One school blamed the policy of building slow merchant ships with a speed not normally exceeding eleven or twelve knots, and falling below this level in convoy. It was urged that faster ships capable of at least fifteen knots in convoy should be built in large numbers. Even if they took more time to build, they would take less time transporting goods oversea, their turn-round would be quicker and the ships themselves less vulnerable. Mr. Alexander addressing members of the Constitutional Club on January 14, had given the arguments against the suggested change of building policy and defended them by the assertion that losses of fast and slow ships in this war showed "about the same percentage." He did not explain what proportion of the loss of fast ships had been incurred in convoy, and whether these were convoys exclusively composed of fast ships. If not, his argument was unsound, for the fast ships would have to conform to the speed of the slowest ship. In spite of his speech, the Chamber of Shipping on February 4 issued a statement urging the construction of faster ships, in which it observed that the shipping industry "have no control over, or voice in, the construction of the ships that have been or are now being built for Government account." Other authorities, Lord Leathers for instance, took a different view. Admiral Thomson, the Chief Press Censor, speaking at Manchester on March 11, with twenty-five years of submarine service to back him, said that the fast merchant ship was no answer to the latest U-boats with surface

speeds of 17-18 knots, and found the remedy in the supply of more escort vessels and sufficient aircraft to patrol a very wide area around the convoys, and thus force the pursuing U-boats to submerge, when their low speed would prevent them from overtaking their quarry.

On the same day Captain Balfour, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Air, informed the House of Commons that Britain was acquiring a number of helicopters for marine protection. It was known that the U.S. Naval authorities had also decided to use the helicopter against submarines since it could take off vertically from and land vertically upon the deck of a ship. It could also carry depth charges and, since it could hover, the aim would be more accurate than from a high-speed aircraft. The Vought-Sikorsky aircraft was being turned out in large quantities for service tests for the U.S. Army.

On March 16 the Admiralty and Air Ministry issued a joint announcement stating that a conference of American, British and Canadian officers had recently been held at Washington at which the anti-U-boat warfare was discussed. The conference, said the announcement

"was one of a series of Allied conferences which have been and which will continue to be held in order that all phases of the . . . campaign can be kept constantly under review, that information and views can be exchanged, and that anti-U-boat measures can be adjusted to best advantage. Complete agreement was reached as to the policy to be pursued in the protection of Allied shipping in the Atlantic and in the best methods of employing the Allied escort vessels, anti-submarine craft and aircraft. . . ." The British and Canadian officers present were Vice-Admiral Sir Henry Moore (Admiralty), Air Vice-Marshal Durston (R.A.F., Coastal Command), Rear-Admiral Brodeur (R.C.N.), and Air Vice-Marshal Anderson (R.C.A.F.).

The Admiralty kept silence as to the enemy's losses in the Atlantic struggle. The Greek destroyer *Adrias* announced the almost certain destruction of a U-boat in the north Atlantic in March, but otherwise nothing definite was published during the quarter. On April 9, indeed, the Admiralty lifted the curtain for a moment to announce the loss of H.M. destroyer *Harvester* in March and the destruction on that occasion of two U-boats. The announcement said :

"The Board of Admiralty regrets to announce that the destroyer, H.M.S. *Harvester* (Commander A. A. Tait, D.S.O., R.N., senior officer of the escort), has been torpedoed and sunk while defending an Atlantic convoy last month. H.M.S. *Harvester* located a U-boat at about midnight,

attacked with depth-charges, and forced her to the surface. The *Harvester* then rammed the U-boat, which became jammed under the destroyer's stern and remained fast for several minutes before breaking clear.

Soon afterwards the Fighting French corvette *Aconit* (Lieut. de Vaisseau Jean Levasseur) sighted the U-boat on the surface, engaged her with gunfire, and shaped course to ram her. The corvette struck U444 amidships and she sank immediately. Survivors were picked up and made prisoners of war.

Although H.M.S. *Harvester* had been damaged aft and was able to proceed only at very slow speed, Commander Tait instructed the *Aconit*, who was then standing by the *Harvester*, to return to the convoy, which was still in danger of attack. Later, H.M.S. *Harvester* was forced to stop, and it was while lying stopped that she was torpedoed and sank.

While picking up survivors from the destroyer the *Aconit* sighted another U-boat on the surface. The U-boat dived and the *Aconit* attacked with depth charges. U432 was forced to the surface, attacked with gunfire, and disabled. Finally, the *Aconit* rammed and sank the enemy. Survivors from H.M.S. *Harvester*, who were waiting to be picked up, saw this second U-boat attacked and sunk."

The captain of the *Harvester* was lost in this encounter. He had been speedily avenged. The *Aconit* brought back survivors from his ship, from a merchantman, some of whose crew the *Harvester* had already picked up, and from the two U-boats.

There were several encounters between small craft in the narrow seas during the quarter and two small raids on the Norwegian coast were reported. The first was said to have been repulsed near Laervik on the night of January 22-23. The second was brilliantly made by small craft manned by the Royal Norwegian Navy early on March 14. Entering Florøe harbour, twenty miles north of Bergen, they destroyed a large supply ship and one of medium size and escaped unscathed. Early on January 19 patrols of our light craft, under the command of Lieutenant P. G. Dickens and Lieutenant J. Weedon, destroyed a small supply ship and one of two trawlers escorting her, for one casualty, who was slightly wounded. An attempt by E-boats on a British convoy in the North Sea was repulsed by the destroyers *Garth* (Lieut.-Commander J. Scapchard) and *Montrose* (Lieut.-Commander W. J. Phipps) without loss to convoy or escort, and an E-boat was destroyed.

There were further encounters in March. Early on March 8 co-operation between a destroyer and a force of light craft commanded by Lieutenant J. S. Price led to the destruction of an E-boat. At midnight on March 9

light coastal forces, under Lieutenant K. Gemmell, engaged enemy patrol ships off the Dutch coast and left one burning. An hour later our ships intercepted a large, strongly escorted tanker and torpedoed her, leaving her in flames. One of our small ships did not return from this affair in which our gunfire damaged enemy escort vessels. Before dawn on March 10 light coastal forces, manned by the Fighting French Navy, under Capitaine de Corvette Meurville, torpedoed a small supply ship in a convoy off the coast of Brittany and got away without casualties or damage. On the night of March 11-12 light forces commanded by Lieutenant B. C. Ward intercepted a supply ship of medium size which was attempting to pass eastwards through the Straits of Dover, and although she was strongly escorted and hugged the French coast, they sent one torpedo home. Our ships had few casualties and slight damage. Early on March 16 light coastal forces under the command of Lieut. D. G. Wright, torpedoed two large supply ships off Terschelling, and on March 23 a convoy was intercepted and severely punished by our light craft, in which one rating was slightly wounded. Early on March 29 forces commanded by Lieut. D. G. Bradford intercepted a force of E-boats, blew one up and rammed and sank another without suffering casualties.

No surface raiders appear to have been encountered by the King's Navy in the Atlantic during this period. A large German supply ship was sunk in the Bay of Biscay by H.M.S. *Scylla* (Captain I. A. MacIntyre). The cruiser was guided to the kill, so the Admiralty stated on January 5, by an aircraft of Coastal Command. The supply ship carried a large cargo of raw materials for Germany.

On February 28 a large enemy tanker was sighted by a Liberator bomber of the U.S.A.A.F. under the orders of the C-in-C. Coastal Command about 500 miles west-south-west of Cape Finisterre. The Liberator reported the tanker's position and shadowed her for some hours until H.M.S. *Sussex* (Captain W. Y. La R. Beverley) appeared, having received the Liberator's report and having steered to intercept the tanker. Shortly after 4 p.m. the British cruiser opened fire and the tanker was set ablaze. Her crew abandoned ship. She sank at 6.10 p.m. H.M.S. *Sussex* did not stop to pick up survivors owing to the presence of U-boats and of German aircraft which witnessed the sinking.

The following were the principal changes in commands announced during the period here chronicled.

On January 13 the Admiralty announced that a new post, that of Chief of Naval Information, had been instituted. This officer would be responsible for planning and co-ordinating all forms of Naval publicity. Admiral

Sir William James, recently Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth, was the first holder of the post. Late in March Admiral Sir John Tovey handed over the command-in-chief of the Home Fleet to Acting Vice-Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser and became Commander-in-Chief, the Nore. Vice-Admiral Sir Henry Moore took Sir Bruce Fraser's place as Second-in-Command, the Home Fleet. Acting Vice-Admiral Sir E. Neville Syfret became Vice-Chief of the Naval Staff in Sir Henry Moore's stead. Rear-Admiral W. R. Patterson became a Lord Commissioner of the Admiralty and an Assistant Chief of General Staff. Another Assistant C.G.S. was Captain (Acting Rear-Admiral) R. M. Servaes. Acting Vice-Admiral A. U. Willis became Flag Officer Commanding Force "H" in succession to Admiral Syfret. Two earlier appointments of interest (announced on January 25) were those of Rear-Admiral J. H. Edelsten to be a Lord Commissioner of the Admiralty and an Assistant C.G.S., and of Vice-Admiral E. L. S. King to be Principal Naval Liaison Officer to Allied Navies.

Among the notable promotions recorded was that of Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham to be Admiral of the Fleet, to date January 21.

2 : AIR WARFARE IN THE WEST

The air offensive against Germany for 1943 opened with an attack on the Ruhr on January 3-4. By January 9 our night bombers had made five attacks on the Ruhr, in the last of which Essen was the chief target. Our losses were moderate, seventeen machines in these operations. Several daylight raids were also undertaken against objectives in Holland, Belgium and France. After the sixth attack on the Ruhr (January 11-12) an improvement in the weather made it possible to undertake a large combined operation against Lille and other targets in Northern France, in which British, American, New Zealand, French and Polish squadrons participated (January 13). Two attacks on the Ruhr on January 12-13 and 13-14 cost us few machines. In the second Essen was again chief target and 100 tons of bombs were dropped in twelve minutes. On January 14-15 and 15-16 the R.A.F. bombed the submarine base of Lorient for an hour. On January 16, after a break of more than a year, a strong force of heavy bombers attacked Berlin by night. The Air Ministry's report spoke of the discharge of a great weight of explosives and incendiaries, and its News Service said that 8,000-lb. bombs were among those dropped. The raid lasted an hour. Only one machine

was reported missing. The attack on Berlin was repeated on January 17-18, but this time the weather was unfavourable and many German night-fighters were up. One was destroyed, but we lost twenty-two machines. More bad weather restricted operations until January 21-22, when the R.A.F. attacked the Ruhr without very certain results. On January 22 we carried out offensive operations on a large scale over northern France and Belgium. The Air Ministry announced that

"Aircraft of Bomber Command bombed oil installations at Terneuzen, near Ghent, and enemy airfields at Maupertus, Abbeville and St. Omer. Many squadrons of R.A.F., U.S.A.A.F., Dominion and Allied fighters took part in these attacks, escorting and covering the bombers. They destroyed seven enemy fighters in air combats. Four bombers and six fighters¹ are missing from these operations. . . ." Norwegian and Belgian units took part in these attacks.

On Saturday Lorient suffered two attacks, the first in daylight by Flying Fortresses, the second by R.A.F. Bomber Command. The Americans lost five bombers and the R.A.F. three. The daylight raid was part of a large operation wherein aircraft of Bomber, Fighter and Army Co-operation Commands had a share. The attack extended from Brittany to north-western Germany, where trains were the chief targets. One Mustang squadron shot-up seventeen railway engines. Troops, barges and tugs were also attacked. The R.A.F. also raided Western Germany that night.

On January 25 Bomber Command escorted by British, American, Canadian and Allied fighters, raided Flushing by day. On January 27 German sea-power received two painful blows. Mosquitoes attacked the shipyards at Copenhagen in the afternoon and planted a number of bombs on the submarine Diesel engine works in Burmeister and Wain's well-known yards. We only lost one machine. On the same day the Americans opened a campaign which the Germans had long feared. Their European Headquarters reported :

"In daylight to-day the U.S. Army 8th Air Force carried out its first attack on enemy objectives in Germany. Flying Fortresses . . . made a

¹ American-built Mitchell (B25) medium bombers took part in this daylight operation.

large-scale attack on the enemy naval base at Wilhelmshaven. Liberators bombed other targets in north-west Germany. The naval base at Wilhelmshaven was heavily bombed, but results were difficult to observe. The bombers, which were not escorted, encountered enemy fighters, a number of which were destroyed. Three of our bombers are missing."

On the previous night the R.A.F. had made the fifth attack in a fortnight on Lorient, starting large fires, and had also attacked Bordeaux. On the night of January 27 Lancasters and Halifaxes, six of which did not return, struck Dusseldorf, dropping several hundred tons of high explosives, including many 4,000-lb. bombs, in less than twenty minutes. Four Commands, Bomber, Army Co-operation, Fighter and Coastal, were engaged in daylight operations on January 29, when the railway viaduct at Morlaix in Brittany, trains and barges in northern France and a large supply ship, sunk off the coast of Norway, were among the targets. On January 30 Berlin sustained two painful shocks. Timing their arrival perfectly, Mosquito bombers appeared over the city at 11 a.m.—when Göring was to have deputized for Hitler and marked the completion of ten years of Hitler's regime by a broadcast addressed to the nation and the armed forces. The speech was postponed for an hour and listeners, wrote the aeronautical Correspondent of *The Times* (*loc. cit.* Feb. 1), heard

"first a confused noise and scrambling as people in the Air Ministry took cover, then several apologies for the delay—and martial music played on a gramophone. It was not until midday that Göring started to speak."

The next group of Mosquitoes appeared when Goebbels was to read Hitler's proclamation. It lost one machine. The first group took the enemy completely by surprise. Later, Wellingtons bombed Emden and that night objectives in western Germany were raided by heavy bombers and great fires were left burning. So January ended. On only eight occasions had the enemy enjoyed twenty-four hours' respite from bombing. The enemy had also to defend himself against many fighter sweeps over France.

On February 1 over 200 fighters, including Polish squadrons, carried out offensive sweeps and escorted bombers attacking Bruges and Abbeville. Hostile aircraft

avoided battle and we suffered no loss. Norwegian pilots shot down one Me109. The next combined operation in northern France on February 3 was more expensive. We lost two bombers and eight fighters against three enemy machines. American and Polish squadrons were engaged. That night heavy bombers flew through appalling weather to attack Hamburg in strength. They left many large fires, but lost sixteen of their number. On February 4 the U.S.A.A.F. made their second daylight raid on Germany, but bad weather made it difficult to assess the results of their attacks on targets in the north-west. They lost five machines but claimed twenty-five fighters, including FW190s, Me109s, 110s, 210s and Ju88s. Lorient experienced its heaviest raid early in the night of February 7 shortly after which the Vichy Government ordered its evacuation and that of Brest by "all persons whose presence is not essential." On February 11-12 Wilhelmshaven was the target, and an exceptionally terrific explosion was recorded. Next day Mosquitoes, Whirlwinds and Mustangs attacked rolling stock and engines, several of which they damaged, with many other targets in France, the Low Countries and north-west Germany. Then Lorient had another pounding on the night of February 13-14, when over 1,000 tons of bombs were dropped. On February 14 strongly escorted light bombers of the R.A.F. raided Tours, St. Malo and other objectives as far as Holland. We lost eight fighters to the German ten. On February 15 Liberators and Bostons, with R.A.F., Dominion and Allied escort raided Dunkirk by day. Two did not return, but their escort demolished ten German fighters without loss. U.S. bombers next raided St. Nazaire by daylight losing six of their number, and Mosquitoes damaged railway workshops at Tours. On the night of February 16 Lorient sustained its 67th attack in which British heavy bombers claimed to have done much damage.

Wilhelmshaven had its 73rd raid on the night of February 18 and next night our machines repeated the dose. We lost fifteen bombers in these two operations. Army Co-operation Command carried out its first substantial

bombing operation on the night of February 19 when it attacked electric transformer stations in France. On February 22 the Air Ministry News Service announced on the strength of photographic evidence that the great explosion recorded on the night of February 11-12 was that of the great Mariensiel depot, where torpedoes, depth-charges, mines and naval ammunition were stored. Fully 150 acres of buildings and sheds were laid in ruins. Then came the 102nd raid on Bremen (February 21-22) from which every one of a great force of bombers returned. On the night of February 25 the R.A.F. went much further afield. A strong force made a concentrated attack on Nuremberg, doing great damage to the industrial quarter. The main bombing was completed in twenty minutes. We lost nine machines. The R.A.F. also attacked objectives in western Germany that night.

The offensive continued. On the night of February 26 over 400 bombers gave Cologne its severest punishment since the 1,000-bomber raid in May, while others dropped bombs on other objectives in western Germany and machines of Fighter Command attacked railways during intruder patrols in France. Next day American "heavies" bombed Brest and returned safely, although three of their fighter escort were lost. That night western Germany received a minor visitation and Bomber Command also dropped mines in German waters. In the afternoon of February 28 Whirlwinds covered by Spitfires raided Maupertus aerodrome in the Cherbourg peninsula and Mosquitoes bombed factories at Hengelo in Holland and near Liège. Between the evening of February 26 and the morning of the 28th "more than 2,000 aircraft of the four home-based R.A.F. Commands: Bomber, Fighter, Coastal and Army Co-operation, took part in our offensive, flying about 1,500,000 miles."¹ Twenty-three raids had already been made on the Reich in February, and in addition to the major operations chronicled here, our light bombers, fighter-bombers and fighters had made a number of harassing attacks on the enemy's aerodromes, transport and communications in occupied Western Europe.

¹ The aeronautical correspondent of *The Times*, *loc. cit.* March 1.

On the night of February 28 Bomber Command made a heavy attack on St. Nazaire, during which over 1,000 tons of high explosive and incendiary missiles were rained down on that important U-boat base in three-quarters of an hour. It was the 44th raid on St. Nazaire and the most successful. There were thick clouds on the way out, but visibility above the target was perfect. Five machines did not return from the night's operations, which included raids on western Germany.

Summing up our offensive air operations during February, the aeronautical correspondent of *The Times* wrote :

"... the three home-based R.A.F. Commands and the U.S.A.A.F. made fifteen daylight attacks on Germany and occupied territory, while Bomber Command also sent strong forces to attack Italy on two occasions. In what, as the Prime Minister pointed out in a message to Air Chief Marshal Harris, was the heaviest month of bombing since the start of the war," the three R.A.F. Commands had lost 156 machines. The Americans had lost 20 bombers and a fighter in five operations. Mr. Churchill's message to Air Chief Marshal Harris was: "I congratulate you and all ranks of the Metropolitan Bomber Command upon the fine rate of discharge upon Germany and Italy and other enemy targets achieved during the month of February. In total volume you exceeded by half as much again any previous month of the war. February thus marks quite a definite advance to which further improvements will be made."

The "non-stop" offensive continued in March. - On the night of March 1-2 the sixth successive night raid was launched against Berlin. Targets in western Germany were also attacked. Only the latest four-engined bombers were used against Berlin. They dropped a great weight of explosives, including 8,000-lb. and 4,000-lb. bombs, and a vast quantity of incendiaries over Berlin in half an hour. Weather conditions were favourable, great fires were seen and the enemy admitted much damage, as usual chiefly to "residential quarters." In this and other operations which included mine-laying we lost nineteen aircraft that night. After small-scale activity over western Germany on March 2-3, and extensive mining of enemy waters, Mosquitoes attacked Norway on March 3 and damaged the molybdenum crushing and washing plant at the Knaben mines, forty miles east of Stavanger, losing but one machine.

Hamburg sustained a heavy attack on the night of March 3, while aircraft of Fighter Command made

intruder patrols over Holland. We lost ten bombers, the majority, perhaps, to night-fighters over Hamburg. On March 4 American Flying Fortresses attacked targets in Germany and Holland in spite of bad weather. One formation reached the marshalling yards and railway junction at Hamm encountering no opposition there and made many hits. On their return the Americans were heavily attacked, but most returned, claiming fourteen German fighters as their victims. Another formation attacked the shipyards at Rotterdam with success. Five U.S. machines were lost. Then came a "very heavy and concentrated attack" on Essen (March 5-6) half-way through which an exceptionally heavy explosion was observed to send flames to a height estimated at 1,000 feet. The attack cost us fourteen bombers. Nearly 1,000 tons of incendiary and explosive bombs were dropped.¹ On March 6 Brest and Lorient were attacked by day. A report issued by the Air Ministry and the U.S.A.A.F. said :

"Flying Fortresses . . . and Liberators . . . of the U.S. Eighth Army Air Force attacked targets at Brest and Lorient on Saturday afternoon in favourable weather. The docks at Brest were attacked by Liberators escorted by R.A.F. and Allied fighter squadrons. In spite of strong fighter opposition and intense flak, the bombing results were satisfactory. At Lorient Flying Fortresses obtained excellent results. Many hits were observed in the target area where a naval power station was left in flames. A railroad bridge . . . received direct hits and part of it was destroyed. Intense heavy flak was encountered. . . . Three bombers and two fighters are missing."

On March 8 Flying Fortresses and Liberators attacked the railway yards at Rouen and the important U-boat supply centre and railway yards at Rennes. Weather conditions were favourable and the bombers, escorted and covered by R.A.F., U.S.A.A.F., Dominion and Allied fighter squadrons met with great success. They encountered fighter opposition in strength, especially over Rouen. Five bombers and two fighters were reported missing, but at least twenty German fighters were destroyed in "heavy and persistent encounters" by the bombers and five more fell to their fighter escorts. Rennes, from which the Germans supply their U-boats and naval yards at Lorient, Brest and St. Nazaire, was less prepared

¹ For Sir Archibald Sinclair's account of these raids, see p. 245.

than Rouen, and the fighter escorts of the bombers encountered little resistance. On the same afternoon towards dusk Mosquitoes attacked railway targets in northern France and north-west Germany. That night R.A.F. night bombers "were out in strength over southern Germany, with Nuremberg as their main objective." Western Germany was also attacked. Over Nuremberg the flak was not intensive, the enemy seeming to depend chiefly on co-operation between night fighters and search-lights. We only lost seven machines, a small percentage of the total engaged, against a German night-fighter. According to neutrals, Nuremberg was as extensively devastated as Lübeck and Rostock had been.

On the night of March 9-10 four-engined bombers of the R.A.F. dropped 500 tons of explosives and incendiaries on Munich in an attack which did not attain the dimensions of that on Nuremberg, but was heavy and successful. The Germans complained that residential quarters and cultural monuments were hit and their wireless later said that the Schack, Glyptothek and Pinakothek art galleries had been destroyed. Lovers of the arts hoped that the German authorities, profiting by previous warnings, had removed the magnificent collections from these galleries to safety. Eleven machines were lost in the attack, against two German night-fighters. Later reconnaissances showed that the notorious Brown House, the centre of Nazi activities since the early days of the party, was among the "cultural monuments" which had been damaged. Next came the turn of Stuttgart, which was heavily bombed on the night of March 11-12. The industrial centre which was attacked included the Bosch works, famous for the magnetos, sparking plugs, fuel injection pumps and other accessories for internal combustion engines which they turned out. Here we lost eleven machines. Flak was described as not heavy by the usual German standards, but fiercer at the end of the attack than at the beginning. Enemy night-fighters were active. One was shot down. On March 12 Flying Fortresses carried out a highly successful attack on the railway marshalling yards at Rouen, and escorting American,

British and Allied Spitfire squadrons destroyed three German fighters which sought to intervene. Our aircraft had no loss. At dusk Mosquitoes raided the large Cockerill engineering and armament works at Liège where parts for submarines were made as well as heavy armaments. Essen, where reconnaissance showed that about 450 acres of buildings had been devastated by the last raid, was attacked on the night of March 12-13, when the R.A.F. lost twenty-three machines, but claimed to have wrought terrific destruction on the Krupp works, on which more than 1,000 tons of bombs were dropped in a brief and furious attack. The fires kindled were burning eighteen hours later. On March 11 Sir Archibald Sinclair gave Parliament some account of the damage done at Essen in the attack of March 5-6 as shown by photographs, and on March 16 the Air Ministry published photographs, with explanations, of the results of the attack on the night of March 12. The first of these raids was described by the Secretary of State as

"probably the heaviest blow struck at German war industry in the whole of the Bomber offensive." In the Krupp works 13 main buildings had been destroyed or severely damaged and damage could be seen in at least 40 other factory buildings, sheds and workshops. Most of these were in the steel works and included heavy damage to such key sections as furnaces, foundry and forges. . . . Other industrial damage included the part destruction of pithead installations and the buildings of three mines. There was a direct hit on the Essen power station and damage to the gas works extended over 3½ acres. Over an area of 450 acres 75 per cent of the buildings had been demolished or gutted. Some 30,000 inhabitants of Essen, mostly persons employed in the Krupp works, were made homeless. In summarizing the results of the second attack the Air Ministry said that 34 shops in Krupps were affected, 13 severely. The vast locomotive building shop had been severely damaged by fire and the rolling stock shop, untouched by the first raid, had been destroyed. On March 17 the Air Ministry announced that over 400 bombers had been employed in each of these raids with some 3,000 men. Our losses over a centre so powerfully defended by A.A. batteries and searchlights, as well as by numerous night-fighter machines, had been remarkably light.

In a special message of congratulation to Air Marshal Sir Arthur Harris, C.-in-C. Bomber Command, the Secretary of State for Air said :

"Your cunningly planned and brilliantly executed attacks on Krupps have destroyed no small part of Germany's biggest war factory. Congratulations to you and all under your command on this achievement in the teeth of Germany's strongest defences."

After the second raid on Essen came an interval marked by smaller daylight raids on Paderborn (March 16) and targets in Brittany. On March 18 Flying Fortresses and Liberators made a daylight attack described as "one of the most effective up to date," on the U-boat yards at Vegesack. The Americans came in strength. Though heavily attacked by fighters, they only lost two of their number, and they inflicted heavy punishment on their assailants. On the night of March 20-21 Whirlwinds bombed the Morlaix viaduct in Brittany without loss. On March 22 the American "heavies," again attacking by daylight, raided Wilhelmshaven in bright weather. They did great damage and they inflicted terrible losses on the German fighters which intercepted them over the North Sea and the Frisian Islands. Only three did not return. The loss of the Germans in fighters in this raid and in the attack on Vegesack on March 18 was stated by Major-General Ira C. Eaker, G.O.C. Eighth U.S. Army Air Force, to have been eighty machines. After announcing these figures the General said :

"We have come to the end of an experiment, and the Liberators and Fortresses have proved themselves completely. It is agreed by British and American authorities that the experiment of using our bombers for daylight high-precision attack has succeeded without uneconomical loss. We are now going to have the maximum number of aircraft and crews. Hundreds of United States bombers will be operating from Britain this summer. There are plenty of targets waiting in Germany for continuous raids by ourselves and the R.A.F. American planes attacking in daylight will light up the targets for the R.A.F. operating at night and in return the R.A.F. will leave behind smoke and fire from their night raids. . . ." The Americans, the General explained, used the R.A.F. rule for claims of enemy aircraft destroyed and were most careful not to allow any claim about which there could be the slightest doubt. He explained that scoring the number of American victims shot down in daylight was an entirely different problem from the R.A.F. problem of calculating hostile aircraft shot down at night. The night bomber flew as an individual aircraft. In the daytime the Americans might have thirty-six bombers in a formation. Any enemy fighter diving at that formation would be fired upon by all the bombers and duplicate claims might therefore arise. Claims had, therefore, to be most carefully studied. As many as 1,000 were examined after a raid and the evidence was sifted by experts for two or three days.¹

Mosquitoes serving in Fighter Command scored their first daylight victory on March 22 when they brought down two Ju88s over the Bay of Biscay.

¹ *The Times*, March 25.

Targets in Holland and railways in France continued to be attacked, and on March 23 Mosquitoes raided the locomotive works near Nantes by day. That night the R.A.F., after being held up since the night of March 12 by unfavourable weather, resumed its nocturnal attacks and made the 45th raid on St. Nazaire. Nearly 300 four-engined bombers were engaged and we only lost one. On March 26-27 we raided Duisburg, losing four machines. On the night of March 27 a powerful force of Lancasters, Halifaxes and Stirlings made a fierce and concentrated attack on Berlin, dropping over 900 tons of bombs,¹ many of the largest calibres. The main attack began about 11 p.m. and was over in half an hour. Flak was not heavy by German standards. Many searchlights were in operation but, owing perhaps to the prevalence of cloud, night-fighters were not much in evidence. We lost nine machines. The enemy admitted much damage though he restricted it to "residential quarters, public buildings and cultural monuments."

On March 28 American heavy bombers covered by British, Dominion and Allied fighters raided the railway yards at Rouen by day, and Venturas attacked ship-building yards at Rotterdam in the afternoon. The Rouen operation cost the attack five machines. Several German fighters were shot down. On the same night Bomber Command paid St. Nazaire their 46th visit, when great fires were seen and only two bombers were lost. Then came a very heavy attack on Berlin on the night of March 29, accompanied by a less heavy but serious attack on Bochum and other objectives in the Ruhr. About 600 aircraft were believed to have been engaged in these operations. Twenty-one were lost over Berlin and twelve over the Ruhr. Berlin had, perhaps, its heaviest bombing since it was first attacked, and one enormous explosion, too great to have been the bursting of an 8,000-lb. bomb, was seen by many pilots. It was the R.A.F.'s 60th attack on the German capital, but only the second on Bochum, one of the chief centres of the German coal and iron industry. Daylight raids o

¹ Twice the weight dropped on London in the heaviest German attack.

Eindhoven and Rotterdam, on Abbeville and aerodrome and railway targets in Brittany, were made on March 29 and 30, and on the last day of March Flying Fortresses with fighter escort raided the Rotterdam shipyards. In London all preparations had been made to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the formation of the Royal Air Force on April 1.

German air-raids on Britain during the first quarter of 1943 were more irritating than damaging. They usually took the form of "hit-and-run" attacks. Given fair cloud cover, a small number of fast fighter or fighter-bomber machines and a share of good luck, this method of attack promised a fair measure of success, that is if the bombing of a few streets and the machine-gunning of civilians in towns and villages on or near the south and east coasts, and the prompt escape of the raiders, could be reckoned as such. The Germans scarcely ever attacked military objectives in these raids, which explained their frequent immunity from punishment, but on occasion they were roughly handled and, towards the end of the period under review, their losses began to rise rapidly. The "Typhoon," a development of the famous Hawker Hurricane fighter, was coming into action in increasing numbers and many of these very speedy machines were being stationed near the south coast.

The first German attack of 1943 killed twelve persons in the Isle of Wight on January 2. On the night of January 3 two bombers, one of which came to grief, crossed the north-eastern coast, which furnished the German radio with an excuse for averring that "waves of bombers" had wrought devastation in Hull! Towns in the south-west were attacked on January 8 and 10, while eastern coast towns saw small raids during the following week in which the enemy lost four machines, one shot down off Great Yarmouth.

Then came attempts by the *Luftwaffe* to avenge recently raided Berlin. On the night of January 17-18 the enemy made two attacks on London and other places in south-east England, in the first of which twenty-five or thirty machines were engaged from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m., while a

smaller number attacked in the small hours of January 18. Both formations found our barrage too heavy and few passed beyond the suburbs, although one bomb fell near Buckingham Palace. Speaking generally, damage and casualties from bombs were slight, but more citizens were killed than need have been by shells and splinters from our own guns, because they imprudently stayed in the streets "to see the fun." Of the German raiders ten out of fifty or sixty were destroyed. Wing-Commander C. M. Wight-Boycott established a night-fighting record by shooting down four bombers on the same night.

The Germans next attacked by day and did more harm. About 11.50 a.m. on March 20 between 70 and 100 aircraft came over the Channel, helped by cloud. Of these some 30 fighters and fighter-bombers crossed the coast near Beachy Head. Heavy A.A. fire and fighter attacks broke up their formation, but six got through to London and dropped bombs, doing relatively little material damage, but causing many casualties, notably at a suburban elementary school where the central section was blown in upon about 150 children while they ate their dinner. Five teachers and 39 pupils were killed and over 20 were injured. The aeroplanes which had been headed off from London attacked various localities from Kent to the Isle of Wight before recrossing the Channel. Their losses in this "retaliatory" operation were heavy. Fifteen were shot down against two British machines (one pilot being saved), and since two bombers were destroyed over East Anglia that night, January 20 was an expensive day for the *Luftwaffe*. There were no attacks of any consequence during the last third of the month. Civilian casualties for January were :

	Children			
	Men	Women	under 16	Total
Killed or Missing	107	145	76	358
Injured and detained in hospital	180	225	102	507

Little can be said of the enemy's raids in February for it seems unfair to the reader to condemn him to a list of

attacks by small numbers of hostile aircraft on an unspecified "south coast resort" or "towns in the south-west" and so forth in which "a few" or "a number" of casualties were inflicted and varying material damage was caused. Evidence that some of the German pilots were too summarily trained to be able to recognize the places which they raided on or near the coasts of England and South Wales, etc., explained the uncommunicativeness of our *communiqués*. Mention need only be made of the raid on February 9 when a fair number of FW109s took advantage of low cloud to cross the south-east coast after which they fanned out and caused some loss of life by bombing and machine-gunning. Besides places in the south of England and Wales the Germans raided the north-east coast of Scotland and East Anglia. Civilian casualties for the month totalled :

	Men	Women	Children under 16	Total
Killed or missing	93	136	23	252
Injured and detained in hospital	134	177	36	347

In March the enemy was more active and his losses increased. On the night of March 3 he made two small "reprisal" raids on London. About thirty-five machines were engaged in the first raid and some twenty in the second. Few reached the capital on either occasion and at least four were shot down. But a tragic disaster in a tube shelter, miles away from any fall of bombs, caused the death of 178 persons and injury to 60. The Ministry of Home Security issued a statement on March 4 which gave the following account of the occurrence :

"... shortly after the air-raid alert sounded substantial numbers of people were making their way as usual towards the shelter entrance. There were nearly 2,000 in the shelter, including several hundreds who had arrived after the alert, when a middle-aged woman, burdened with a bundle and a baby, tripped near the foot of a flight of nineteen steps which leads down from the street. This flight of steps terminates on a landing.

The woman fell down the last two or three steps and lay on the landing. Her fall tripped an elderly man behind her, and he fell similarly. Their bodies again tripped up those behind them and within a few seconds a large number of people were lying on the lower steps and the landing, completely blocking the stairway. Those coming in from the street could

not see exactly what had taken place, and continued to press down the steps, so that within a minute there were hundreds of people crushed together and lying on top of one another, covering the landing and the lower steps. . . ."

By the time the police, wardens, soldiers, W.V.S. and civilian volunteers (who did good work and probably saved many lives by their promptitude) had extricated the bodies, a great number had been suffocated in the crush. An official inquiry was ordered, to establish in greater detail what took place and to see whether any structural or administrative weaknesses had been brought to light.

On March 7 twelve enemy aircraft bombed and machine-gunned a south-eastern coast town from roof height and killed a number of people. Two were brought down. On the night of March 7-8 the enemy raided the south-eastern and home counties, losing four aircraft. On March 11 eighteen aircraft bombed a south-east coast town identified by the enemy with Hastings, and that night a few machines appeared in northern England. Four were shot down on each occasion. Early on March 12 some twenty-four bombers and fighter-bombers crossed the Essex coast whence some reached the outskirts of London and did much non-military damage. A Norwegian squadron pounced upon them and destroyed five without loss. Five girls were killed in an East Anglian women's hostel which was bombed before dawn on March 18. On March 24 some eighty schoolboys in Kent were lucky to reach their shelter a bare minute before their school was wrecked by a few bombers, two of which were shot down, one near Ashford. That night about twenty-five German machines appeared over northern England and the Lowlands. They did little damage and eight, an exceptionally high proportion, were destroyed. Civilian casualties in March were :

	Children			
	Men	Women	under 16	Total
Killed and missing, believed killed ..	116	136	41	293
Injured and detained in hospital ..	201	204	34	439

The following were the respective losses of the *Luftwaffe* the R.A.F. and the U.S.A.A.F. on the western air fronts :

Over and Around Britain, 1943 (first quarter)

		<i>German</i>	<i>R.A.F.</i>	<i>U.S.A.A.F.</i>
January ..	39	2	—	
February ..	16	—	—	
March ..	60	1	—	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	
Total ..	115	3	Nil	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	

Over Western and North-Western Europe, 1943 (first quarter)

		German	R.A.F.	U.S.A.A.F.
		by R.A.F. by U.S.A.A.F.		
January ..	29	41 = 70	120	19
February ..	38	49 = 87	156	21
March ..	36	111 = 147	189	20
	—	—	—	—
Total ..	103	201 = 304	465	60
	—	—	—	—
Grand total		419	468	60
		—	—	—

Among the changes in and appointments to the higher commands of the R.A.F. that of Air Chief Marshal Sir Frederick Bowhill to be Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief in the newly formed Transport Command may be mentioned. It was announced on March 15. On March 18 it was made known that Air Vice-Marshal A. H. Orlebar, who was in charge of the High Speed Flights of the R.A.F. which retained the Schneider Trophy in 1929 and won it outright in 1931, had been appointed Deputy Chief of Combined Operations.

3 : THE ARMY IN BRITAIN

No British raids on the French coast or on the Channel Islands were reported during the quarter, although small descents by naval and Norwegian forces seem to have

been made on points on the coast of Norway. The British and Dominion prisoners of war whose chaining by the Germans is referred to in the previous volume of this series, were still fettered at the end of this quarter, although the conditions of this punishment appear to have been mitigated to some extent. There seemed little chance of arriving at any arrangement with the enemy until we had more German prisoners than he had British. Negotiations continued with the Swiss Government acting as go-between.

Save for occasional accounts of "new" methods of training, which in fact had been in operation for some time before the Press was allowed to mention them, the public had little information about the Army at home during this period. More American and Canadian troops had arrived, British Divisions had gone abroad or changed station, the training of the Home Guard had been greatly improved and extended to enable this force to fill the gaps left by the departure of regular troops and the public believed that a European Second Front would be opened during the next few months. But they knew little and they were not encouraged to be inquisitive. The large-scale exercises carried out by the British and Canadian armies in March were marked by great keenness on the part of the troops engaged and were believed to have taught valuable lessons. At the end of March Mr. Morrison, speaking on behalf of the Government, warned the public that as from April 1 no guarantee could be given that restrictions would not be imposed upon access to certain coastal regions which were to become "regulated" areas.

"The ban on the entry of pleasure visitors will not be in force," he said, "except from the Thames to Hastings, and in the Isle of Wight. On the other hand, a different system of restriction will come into force over a more extensive area of the coast." The Home Minister explained that the whole of the east and south coasts "from the Humber to Penzance," to an approximate depth of 10 miles inland, would be affected, and that this area would include those parts of Kent and Sussex already barred to visitors. Access to this belt might from time to time be restricted or completely barred to visitors without prior notice by the military. The coastal strip from Milford Haven to Portishead at the mouth of the Somersetshire Avon, and areas round the estuaries of the Tay, Forth and Clyde in Scotland, would also be declared regulated areas. Persons wishing to visit

places in these areas were warned to ascertain first whether any special restrictions were in force there. It would not be possible to make any public announcements.

The employment of women of the A.T.S. in various tasks which had been carried out by men was further extended during the quarter. They relieved men in the Army Post Offices as sorters and in January it was announced that the experiment of using them to man searchlight sites had proved entirely successful. No hostile parachutists were reported to have been dropped, and the occasional discharge of shells at the Kentish coast from Cape Grisnez did no particular damage.

CHAPTER V

THE FAR EASTERN WAR

I : BURMA AND THE INDIAN OCEAN

The advance of British and Indian forces into Arakan which was mentioned in the previous volume of this chronicle¹ developed into an inconclusive but sanguinary campaign. Early in January our troops pushing down the Mayu Peninsula encountered their outposts north of Donbaik while another column, after crossing the Mayu River much further north, reached their entrenched positions at Rathedaung on its eastern bank. From the first the Japanese infantry offered a most obstinate resistance at both points and our progress was slow and difficult. In the air the R.A.F. and the 10th U.S. Army Air Force were at least equal in numbers and were certainly superior in quality to the enemy, and they maintained the initiative from the outset of the campaign. While the Hurricanes and Blenheims of the R.A.F. co-operated closely with our ground troops in Arakan, they lost no opportunity of attacking the enemy's communications in Lower and Central Burma. On January 2 they raided Magwe aerodrome with effect. Next day they destroyed transport at Meiktila, and on January 4 and 5 they attacked military targets ranging from the Arakan coast to Mandalay. The Americans had also struck shrewd blows, notably by sinking a 15,000-ton vessel moving up the Rangoon river on January 4. They soon improved upon this achievement by bombing and hitting the highly important bridge over the Irrawaddy at Myitnge near Mandalay. Observers reported that a central span of the bridge was resting on the river bed when the bombers left. The road bridge over the river had been wrecked by our troops before they evacuated

¹ Cf. *The Thirteenth Quarter*, p. 137.

Mandalay and had not been repaired by the enemy as yet and the Myitnge Bridge was his one means of crossing the broad river save by steamer.

In spite of their inferiority in the air the Japanese held their positions at Rathedaung and Donbaik with the utmost resolution. The capture of "Temple Hill," one of three fortified positions north of Rathedaung, by Indian troops apparently on January 9 did not prevent the troops holding the remaining positions from holding out stoutly and even counter-attacking on occasion. In the air the enemy did little. Three bombers which attacked Calcutta on the night of January 15-16 were shot down by a British night-fighter. On the previous afternoon American heavy bombers made a successful attack on an escorted convoy some distance south of Rangoon, in which they hit a cargo vessel of 7,000 tons and left her sinking and abandoned by her crew. During the last half of January air attacks were launched in rapid succession against many important points on the Japanese communications in Burma. On January 24 American "heavies" bombed the docks and shipping at Rangoon. On the following day R.A.F. Hurricanes shot up enemy motor transport on the Taungup-Padang road, destroying a staff car and ten army lorries and killing many soldiers. Prome where our fighters did much damage to transport, Magwe, Meiktila, Mandalay and Heho were among the targets of the Allied aircraft. Akyab and the Japanese positions on the Arakan front were under frequent attack and much damage was inflicted on small craft used by the enemy on the Irrawaddy and Chindwin rivers and on the coast of Arakan.

The enemy's aerial reactions were weak. On January 20 four Japanese aircraft approached Calcutta by night. Two were shot down before they could do any damage and the survivors made off. An attack on Chittagong on January 23 did some damage. Two of the raiders were brought down. An earlier raid on January 17 caused a few service casualties but little damage. A few minor raids on our positions and on our communications in Eastern Bengal were ineffective. The total loss of the

R.A.F. in combat during January was only six machines.¹ One painful incident marked a successful British air attack. An official Japanese report said that two transports laden with Dutch prisoners of war were bombed off Tavoy on January 15 by three Allied aircraft and most of the Dutch prisoners on one ship were killed. The number missing was given as about 500. The incident, said the Information Bureau of the Netherlands East Indies Government, showed that many prisoners of war were being sent by the Japanese to the front for labour duty in disregard of international treaties.

In spite of our superiority in the air the Japanese contrived to hold their main positions. They reinforced their front from Akyab, and probably from farther afield, by sea, using all sorts of small craft for this purpose, as we were doing. Our light craft engaged them when a chance presented itself. On the night of January 24, said an official announcement from Delhi :

"a ship of the Royal Indian Navy on patrol in the Mayu River area was rammed by a heavily-camouflaged coastal craft full of Japanese troops. The Indian vessel opened fire, backed away, and then proceeded to ram and sink the enemy. Japanese casualties were at least fifty. Ours were two officers wounded."

In spite of every effort by our troops, the Japanese succeeded in retaining their main positions throughout February and from time to time made unsuccessful counter-attacks. Their positions were as well sited as they were defended. Writing on February 26 the special correspondent of *The Times*, said :

"The Japanese soldier . . . is able to subsist on the minimum of food and is very much his own captain. And the fact that after weeks of shelling by 25-pounders and mountain artillery the first prisoners were taken only recently, and these badly wounded, is a measure of his fatalistic stubbornness. . . . It is now thought that many of the Japanese dug-outs . . . have lids of armour plates. They have certainly withstood any amount of shelling, though . . . they are believed to have suffered heavy casualties from it. At Donbaik recently we put down a concentration of 250 shells on a small troublesome corner of the enemy's forward line, yet the Bren carriers that then went in were met by a hail of automatic fire from apertures in the ground."

Our transport difficulties were appalling. A few

¹ One pilot survived.

months before our advance only one short motorable road existed in the region, a stretch of eighteen miles from Maungdaw on the coast to Buthidaung. Indian engineer units, "Sappers and Miners" is their official designation, did magnificent work in preparing roads and mule paths through dense jungle and could boast truthfully of having accomplished a mile of road-laying through the most difficult jungle in a single day. Jetties had to be constructed, bridges over muddy rivers or creeks where the daily tides delayed work had to be built or strengthened. Indian coolie labour was timorous and none too efficient. All sorts of craft from paddle-steamers to primitive rowing-boats had to be collected, manned and concentrated. The prevalence of malaria and the exhausting moist heat added to the difficulties of the Army and Navy. .

The Japanese aircraft had increased in number at the end of January but not sufficiently to threaten Allied air dominance. The R.A.F. and the U.S.A.A.F. maintained their pressure. The R.A.F. paid great attention to Akyab and the Japanese positions between it and the front which they bombed and machine-gunned with great regularity. Bombers harassed the enemy's more distant communications and attacked his river and coastal craft, the railways and barracks which he had taken and the Burmese yards which he had ordered to build barges and rafts. Rangoon port was bombed four times in the month. Mandalay, Thazi, Prome, Sagaing and the oilfield towns were raided. In the far north the 10th U.S.A.A.F. attacked Myitkina on more than one occasion. They also bombed Japanese troops in the remote Hukawng Valley where Chin and Kachin guerillero bands under British leadership were harassing the invaders and such Burmans as followed them. Discovering that the Japanese were endeavouring to repair the important Myitnge bridge they renewed their attacks on it. They also began their attacks on the important Pazundaung railway bridge, six miles north of Rangoon, a vital point on the railway from Rangoon to Mandalay. Particularly heavy damage was caused by Hurricanes on February 6.

According to a report from India issued by the War Office on February 7 :

"Various targets were successfully attacked along the railway from Yeu to Ngapayin, in the Lower Chindwin area, and at Thazi junction and Kyaukpadang. Three locomotives and a military lorry were destroyed, and about 40 railway trucks, 8 locomotives, 3 petrol tanks and some small factories were damaged."

Mention must be made here of the brilliant intervention of the small but highly efficient American Air Force in China, now officially styled the 14th U.S.A.A.F., a detachment of whose fighters unexpectedly attacked Japanese transport and troops in north-eastern Burma early in February near Katkai and Kengtung, shooting up twenty trucks full of soldiers, setting a barrack on fire and destroying a grounded aeroplane.¹

Again the Japanese made no effective riposte. Their counter-attacks on our front and communications during February were neither frequent nor effective. They did, however, make one serious attack on the chief American air bases in Assam. After a weak preliminary attack by a few machines on February 23 which caused slight damage and few casualties, they came over forty-six strong on the morning of February 25. They were promptly attacked. Their formation broke up and they were heavily punished. Three fighters and six bombers were certainly shot down and there was reason to believe that more fell in the dense jungles of the Burma-Assam border. One workman was killed and a planter's bungalow was wrecked. No sooner was the combat over than many of the American fighters

"were re-fuelled and loaded with light bombs to resume offensive operations against Japanese installations in northern Burma. Two camps were attacked in the Hukawng valley and heavy American bombers again damaged the Myiting bridge."

Meanwhile the Japanese were in trouble in north-western Burma. This region is inhabited by the Chins, Kachins and other forest peoples, some of whom were lately given to head-hunting like the kindred Nagas. Like the Nagas, too, they are well affected to the British

¹ Report from General Stilwell's headquarters at Chungking dated February 8.

connection and they supplied the Government of Burma with excellent troops. A report from G.H.Q., India, issued on March 1, stated :

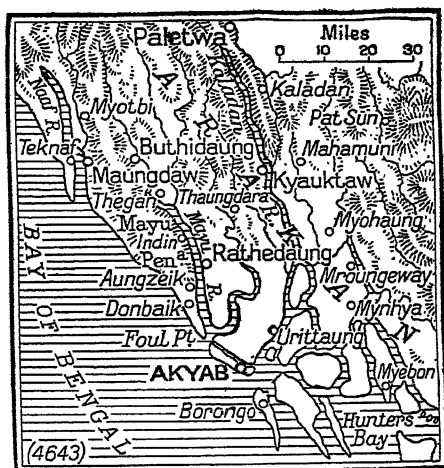
"For several weeks past our Kachin levies operating in the Hukawng valley and north of Myitkyina have been conspicuously successful in ambushing small parties of Japanese on patrol and harassing communications between enemy outposts. Attempts by the enemy to bring the levies to direct action have been successfully evaded and several times the Japanese troops have been led into traps.

The degree of loss and damage inflicted on the Japanese by this guerrilla activity is confirmed by the latest enemy action, which amounts to an advance in force from Myitkyina towards Sumprabum. Our levies are maintaining contact and continue to report successful skirmishes with enemy forward patrols."

On the same day Delhi reported a naval operation, the second within a week. On February 22 a fighting patrol landed from ships of the Royal Indian Navy had landed at the enemy-occupied village of Myebon, sixty miles south-east of Akyab. Only two Japanese were encountered. They were disposed of and the patrol remained for five hours in the village where they burned all buildings useful to the enemy, blew up the jetty and destroyed a river steamer, without suffering any loss. At night on February 26 coastal craft of the Indian Navy detected two armed launches full of troops and ammunition off Ramree Island, not far from Myebon. One launch was blown up, the other set ablaze and left sinking. The Japanese lost 50 men killed or drowned here.

Early in March the situation began to take an unfavourable turn for our forces in Arakan to which the enemy gave a strength of two divisions. We had thrown out a screen of troops to cover the left rear and flank of our forces in the Mayu Peninsula and on the left (eastern) bank of the Mayu River before Rathedaung. The troops constituting this screen had made their way through extremely dense jungle and over steep and trackless hills to Kyauktaw on the west bank of the broad Kaladan River and also to Paletwa, some forty miles farther upstream. The occupation of these two points temporarily prevented the enemy from using the Kaladan for the transport of troops by river steamers and barges and establishing a base from which he could threaten our

flank. But on March 8 parties of Japanese who had slipped across the river seized a forest ridge between Kanzauk, a village some 20 miles north-east of Rathedaung, and Auktaungbyin farther north, and managed to hold it in spite of heavy air attacks. At the same time the enemy reinforced or relieved his hard-pressed troops near the extremity of the Mayu Peninsula where the Donbaik was still in his hands. On March 13 his troops on the



THE ARAKAN FRONT

western bank of the Kaladan were strong enough to attack our positions in the hilly country north of Rathedaung. On March 15 the War Office issued the following announcement from Delhi :

"Heavy fighting has broken out in the Rathedaung area over the weekend. Following substantial reinforcement of their troops in the area a few miles north of Rathedaung, the enemy launched a series of fierce attacks against our left flank, where our positions have been adjusted to meet the situation. These attacks were successfully repulsed, the Japanese losing many killed and wounded and some equipment. Patrols are very active on both sides, and several sharp encounters have taken place. Fighting continues. . . ."

The announcement then referred to the activities of the R.A.F. in support of our ground troops. The check

to the Japanese advance was only temporary. On March 18 G.H.Q., Delhi, announced that our screen in the Kaladan valley had had to be withdrawn under Japanese pressure. Its retreat uncovered the flank of the troops attacking Rathedaung and this involved "further adjustments of our positions." The Japanese next made some advance up the east bank of the Mayu, while British and Indian troops attacked and gained a little ground at the expense of the strongly entrenched Japanese at Donbaik. Whether the attack was designed to cover an eventual retirement from before Donbaik or not it seems to have prevented the Japanese in the southern end of the Mayu Peninsula from taking the initiative. But on the other side of the Mayu the situation changed for the worse. The special correspondent of *The Times* at G.H.Q., India, said on March 23 :

"The two-handed operation astride the Mayu River has admittedly become unbalanced through the steady infiltration of the Japanese in superior strength along the east bank. The threat to the flank and rear became so insistent that for the present the siege of Rathedaung has been lifted and a quantity of equipment and mules had to be abandoned in withdrawing to new positions in the region of Taungmaw. . . . The enemy was already astride the road at some points when the decision to fall back from Htizwe was taken, and travelling light and with a minimum of food, he has come down through the jungle in small batches. . . ."

No further ground fighting of importance was recorded until the end of the month, but it was clear that our prospects of capturing Donbaik before the monsoon rains had been dimmed by the Japanese advance east of the Mayu, and that a further Japanese advance in Arakan might compel the evacuation of the Mayu Peninsula. In any case it was doubtful whether we could maintain our forward positions in Arakan once the rains had begun to convert the country into a fever-breeding swamp.

Meanwhile the Chin and Kachin levies to the north and west of Myitkyina had successfully evaded Japanese attempts to close with them and after "side-stepping" the enemy in the jungles had resumed their attacks on his outposts. They were assisted on several occasions by U.S. aircraft which bombed hostile columns and camps. But Allied air activity was by no means confined to

northern Burma and Arakan. Japanese communications, airfields, ports and transport were subjected to constant attack. The U.S.A.A.F. paid particular attention to the three chief railway bridges in enemy-occupied Burma. On March 1 they hit the great Gokteik viaduct, a structure 2,200 feet in length by which the Mandalay-Lashio railway crosses a deep gorge. On March 5 they attacked the Pazundaung Bridge. On March 9 they attacked the Myitnge Bridge and found that the Japanese were protecting their repair gangs by a smoke-screen. Medium bombers, however, scored hits on the approaches on March 12. On March 10 they had scored several hits on the Mogaung railway bridge in the far north of Upper Burma. On March 15 heavy bombers attacked the Gokteik viaduct again while medium bombers attacked Myitnge bridge. This was attacked again next day when U.S. "heavies" raided Pazundaung bridge with success. March 17 was a great day for the bridge-wreckers. American Air A.H.Q. reported :

"Medium bombers attacked the railway and highway approaches to Myitnge bridge on Wednesday. Direct hits were scored on the track and the road north of the bridge. Another attack was made later in the day and other fighter-bombers attacked the road bridge in the Hukwang (Hukawng) valley in Upper Burma. The bridge and road were damaged. Yesterday (March 18) our heavy bombers attacked Pazundaung bridge. . . . They hit the centre of the bridge squarely as well as damaging the railway tracks both north and south of the bridge. Our bombers also again attacked Myitnge bridge and scored a direct hit on one of the central spans. . . ." On March 21 and 22, according to a later report, two attacks on the Gokteik viaduct did damage. Myitnge bridge was hit again, and earlier blows had "prevented railway traffic over that bridge for many weeks." There were further raids on Myitnge bridge and the Ava bridge near Mandalay on March 24.

Elsewhere the Allied air offensive was energetically maintained. The airfields at Monywa, Toungoo, Heho, Meiktila, Magwe, Mingaladon near Rangoon were often raided. Targets in northern Burma were frequently attacked, as were barracks and railway stations in Prome, Sagaing, Moulmein, Tavoy and other enemy-occupied towns in Lower Burma. In Arakan our aircraft gave all possible support to our ground troops. They destroyed a number of small craft on the rivers and several steamers were also hit on the Irrawaddy and

Chindwin. A cargo vessel damaged in earlier raids was seen resting on the bottom of the Rangoon river.

The Japanese, although they had reinforced their air squadrons in Burma, showed no particular enterprise in counter-attack. On March 23 and 25 they raided an airfield in south-eastern Bengal, and on March 24 they caused a little damage and a few casualties at Chittagong. On March 27 they raided Cox's Bazaar and shipping in the Naaf River. They were skilfully intercepted by our Hurricanes which shot down ten bombers without loss. Two more were destroyed by A.A. fire. Our loss in aircraft through enemy action during February and March did not exceed twenty machines. Not a single U.S. aircraft was lost by enemy attack over Burma in March.

Two naval encounters were chronicled during March. On March 3 one of our small craft attacked and captured a Japanese supply vessel off the mouth of the Mayu River. On March 2 the Netherlands Admiralty announced the sinking of a 4,000-ton Japanese supply ship by a Dutch submarine with gunfire in the Straits of Malacca. It was announced later that the submarine was commanded by Lieut.-Commander F. J. van Dulm, and that she had previously sunk a U-boat in the Mediterranean.

NOTE.—The Press was allowed to mention the following units which were engaged on the Arakan front: Inniskilling Fusiliers, Lancashire Fusiliers, 7th Rajput Regiment, 8th and 15th Punjab Regiments and Tripura Rifles.

2 : CHINA AND JAPAN

The fighting in China (such as it was) dragged on inconclusively. The Chinese were far too poorly armed to undertake more than small local offensives; the Japanese were strong enough to drive them back, to capture localities not too distant from their own lines of communication, to inflict widespread devastation on the country which their columns traversed. But they were not strong enough to hold what they invaded at any great distance from the main railways, canals and arterial rivers. Operation after operation had taken the same turn. The

Japanese commanders, annoyed by attacks on their outposts or communications or hoping to deny the Chinese supplies or simply wishing to prevent their troops from growing stale through inaction pushed forward against the Chinese positions. They got the better of the defence, which was often feeble; they took X or Y townships and tried to hold them. Sooner or later the Chinese regular and irregular troops squeezed them out of these advanced positions, sometimes after fighting, sometimes by merely threatening their communications. Then they returned, sometimes harassed *en route*, to their base, and their commanders would report the successful pacification of another region. They seldom lost many men in these campaigns, but they lost much of their fighting edge, and but for the opportunities of looting, rape and "squeeze" which these operations afforded to all ranks they would probably have had the worst effect on the morale of the barbarians, for vain as they were, they must have recognized that they were no nearer the conquest of China than they had been in 1940.

One rather more ambitious enterprise failed in January.

The Japanese pushed north from their bases in North Hupeh Province with the intention of seizing and holding the passes through the Ta-pieh mountains and thus securing a direct route from Hankow to Anking in Anhwei Province. After capturing and evacuating several cities and a great number of villages they returned to their bases, having accomplished nothing of importance. There were small encounters in Anhwei and on January 27 the Chinese said that the Japanese had used gas in fighting near Huntung, in southern Shansi, but that a change of wind had driven it back on their own lines. Towards the end of January and in February the enemy indulged in small-scale operations in south-west Yunnan, operating from Burma, but they accomplished little, and the attacks of the heavy bombers of the U.S.A.A.F. on their communications (q.v. Section 1 of this chapter) could not have improved their position.

In mid-February the Japanese landed at Kwang-chow-wan Bay in the extreme south of China and opened

local offensives in the Provinces of Hupeh, Kiangsi, Kiangsu and Kwangtung, none of which came to much. Later in the month they recommenced their advance up the Burma Road, but were reported to have been checked on the Salween River on February 20. Siamese troops were said to have been substituted for Japanese at some points on the Yunnan border, and in the Shan States of Burma. On March 23 two Japanese divisions were said to have been engaged in clearing operations between the Yangtze River and the Tungting Lake.

Negotiations between Great Britain and the U.S.A. on the one hand and China on the other for the abolition of the unequal treaties had been in progress for some time. The maintenance of these treaties which every Chinese of spirit found humiliating was equally incompatible with the growing national consciousness of China and with the professions of friendship made by the Western Powers. The judicial reforms effected by the National Government of China since 1927 had removed the basic reasons for the maintenance of consular jurisdiction. Now that torture had been abolished, prisons humanized and new civil and criminal codes introduced, there was no further excuse for a survival which galled Chinese self-respect and confused the commercial relations between Chinese and foreigners.

The Chinese had pressed for the inclusion in the treaty provisions for the immediate return of the leased territory on the mainland opposite Hongkong which the Japanese had taken from us. The British Government, however, declined. They preferred, no doubt rightly, to postpone territorial settlements until after the war. The return of this territory before we had regained it by force of arms would be a meaningless gesture which would neither advantage our own prestige nor benefit the Chinese who were in no position to recover this territory themselves. At the same time the British Government agreed to conclude a more comprehensive treaty with China after the conclusion of hostilities which would cover the rendition of concessions and questions of commerce, navigation and the like.

On January 11 the Governments of Great Britain and the United States signed treaties with China renouncing their extra-territorial rights and establishing equality in all their dealings with the Chinese Government. The Treaty with Great Britain was signed at Chungking by Sir Horace Seymour, our Ambassador, Mr. H. E. Richardson, Secretary of the Indian Agency-General in China, on behalf of the Government of India, and by Mr. T. V. Soong, the Chinese Foreign Minister. The American treaty was signed at Washington by Mr. Cordell Hull and the Chinese Ambassador, Mr. Wei Tao-ming.

The following summary of the Treaty was published in *The Times* (*loc. cit.*, January 12).

Article 1 defines the territories to which the treaty applies, viz: on the British side, Great Britain, Northern Ireland, India and all colonies and dependencies: and on the Chinese side, all the territories of the Republic of China, part of which is now occupied by Japan.

Article 2 ends the practice whereby British subjects could be tried by British consular or other courts in China. "All these provisions of treaties or agreements in force between his Majesty the King and his Excellency the President of the National Government of the Republic of China which authorize his Majesty or his representatives to exercise jurisdiction over nationals or companies of his Majesty in the territory of the Republic of China are hereby abrogated. The nationals and companies of his Majesty the King shall be subject in the territory of the Republic of China to the jurisdiction of the Government of the Republic of China, in accordance with the principles of international law and practice."

Article 3 relinquishes British rights under the Peking (Boxer) Protocol of 1901. This protocol gave the foreign signatory Powers the right, among other privileges, to station troops in Peking and elsewhere and established the Peking diplomatic quarter under foreign control.

Article 4 relinquishes British rights in the International Settlements at Shanghai and Amoy. It undertakes to help the Chinese Government in reaching any necessary agreements with other Governments concerned for transferring the administration of such settlements to China.

On their side the Chinese Government undertake, in taking over control of the official assets of the settlements, to assume and discharge all the official obligations of those settlements. They further undertake to recognize all legitimate rights in the settlements. The clause also provides for the rendition of the British concessions at Tientsin and Canton on the same terms.

By succeeding articles the existing rights and titles to real property in China possessed by British nationals and companies are declared to be indefeasible and not to be questioned except upon legal proof of fraudulent acquisition. No such rights or titles may be alienated to third country nationals without the express consent of the Chinese Government.

The right is established of the nationals of each party to travel, live, and trade throughout the territory of the other party. Each party will try to

accord to the other in his territories national treatment in regard to legal proceedings and taxation. National treatment means the same treatment as that accorded to the natives of the country concerned.

Article 7 provides for consular appointments and for consular privileges, including their right to visit their nationals under detention. Article 8 looks forward to the wider treaty and declares that the outstanding questions will be decided in accordance with the generally accepted principles of international law. Under Article 9 it is laid down that the Treaty shall be ratified and the instruments exchanged in Chungking as soon as possible.

Then comes the exchange of notes, dealing mainly with navigation.

Oversea merchant shipping will receive national treatment and most-favoured-nation treatment. The special rights given to British naval vessels in Chinese waters by former treaties are relinquished. Visiting warships of either party will be received with the courtesy of ordinary international usage. Each party relinquishes any special rights of coasting trade and inland navigation in the territories of the other. Both parties reserve the right to close any port to all oversea merchant shipping for reasons of national security.

It will be seen that many of the provisions provide for the future, for the day when China shall be wholly free. But certain stipulations, for example, those covering jurisdiction in China, come into force forthwith. Throughout the negotiations the British and American Governments kept in close consultation and the treaties are identical in principle.

After the signature of the Treaty General Chiang Kai-shek sent a message to Mr. Churchill.

He expressed his Government's "deep gratification" at the new Treaty with Britain which was "a signal proof of the solidarity among the United Nations not only for the purposes of the war, but also for the winning of the peace." He also broadcast a message in which he said that the abolition of the unequal treaties removed all excuse for the existence of unhealthy conditions in China and he called on the people to fight as one man to lay foundations of a new and better China in the coming peace.

On January 13 the Foreign Minister said that the abolition of extra-territorial rights did not mean that British officials in Chinese service would have to leave. On the contrary, he hoped they would remain.

On February 11 it was announced in London that Field-Marshal Sir John Dill, representing the Prime Minister, and Lieutenant-General H. H. Arnold, representing the President of the United States, had concluded a series of conferences with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek at Chungking, and with Field-Marshal Wavell in India. The announcement added that after the Casablanca Conference and the staff talks there, the Field-Marshal and General Arnold, accompanied by Brigadier-General A. C. Wedemeyer, representing General Marshall, Chief of Staff of the United States Forces,

"went east to acquaint the Generalissimo and the Commander-in-Chief, India, with plans made and their implications for the united war effort against Japan." After recording that Lieutenant-General Stilwell, the Generalissimo's Chief of Staff, and General Ho Ying-chen, Secretary for War and Chief of Staff of the Chinese forces, took part in the conferences and accompanied the British and American representatives to India, where final conferences were held with Marshal Wavell. "Complete accord was reached in the co-ordination of offensive plans, and this signified the united determination of the Powers concerned to ensure full co-operation and mutual assistance in all operations against the Japanese. The fullest possible co-ordination will be ensured by subsequent conferences between General MacArthur and Field-Marshal Wavell."

The departure of a Chinese military mission under Major-General Hu Hsieng-Chung to North Africa was one of the results of these conferences. The Chinese Foreign Minister, Mr. T. V. Soong, reached Washington, after a short stay in India, late in February. Another Chinese military mission, headed by General Hsiung Shih-hui, arrived in London bound for Washington on February 24.

China had an eloquent representative in Mrs. Chiang Kai-shek, whose ill-health did not prevent her from making several admirable speeches in the United States. On February 18 she addressed both Houses of Congress, speaking briefly and extemporaneously in the Senate and reserving her set speech for the House of Representatives.

After paying a tribute to the United States as the cauldron of democracy and the "incubator of democratic nations," she warned Americans against underrating Japan's strength. The House rose and cheered for several minutes when she said that it was not in the interests of the United Nations to allow Japan to continue as a potential threat. Japan had greater resources in the occupied areas than even Germany, and the longer she was left in undisputed possession the stronger she would become.

Peace, she said, must not be punitive in spirit or provincial or nationalistic, or even continental, in concept. It must be universal in scope, and humanitarian in action. China was ready to co-operate in laying its true and lasting foundations.

There were indications that those passages in Mr. Churchill's broadcast of March 21 in which he seemed to assume the postponement of the decisive Allied attack on Japan until Germany had been defeated, were likely to be criticized in China where the strain of the campaign had not lessened and sickness and famine were taking a heavy toll. In March an epidemic of cholera and dysentery ravaged the famine-stricken province of Honan

where locusts and drought had reduced a great majority of the population to desperate straits. Nearly 3,000,000 people left the province strewn the highways with their dead, and it was feared that as many more were doomed in Honan.

There were indications that the Japanese might slightly modify their policy towards the quisling Government of Nanking. Even Wang Ching-wei and his colleagues had found them too woodenly arrogant for collaboration. On March 16 General Tojo announced "a fundamental change" in Japanese policy towards China and ordered Japanese officials and traders in Shanghai to "liquidate" all activities adverse to Chinese interests. But when he said that Shanghai must become a centre of Japanese and Chinese co-operation and that Anglo-American influences must be wiped out there in a manner which must ensure Sino-Japanese co-operation after the war, he seemed to emphasize that this co-operation was compulsory.

Japanese broadcasts on the war were rather less boastful than they had been. Early in the year an official spokesman warned the public that an enormous increase of shipbuilding was needed if Japan was to profit by the resources of her new acquisitions "to be assured of certain victory and an invincible war-time structure." Later General Tojo boasted that the world's chief treasure-house was in Japanese hands and that preparations for offensive and defensive operations were complete. Japan, he claimed, was no longer a "have-not" nation. He announced that Japan would recognize Burmese independence in 1943 and would grant independence to the Philippines if their people would co-operate with the Japanese new order (January 28). On March 6 in a speech in the House of Representatives, he described 1943 as the decisive year, and called for the united support of the nation. He also said that Japan was fighting for the reconstruction of "Asia for the Asiatics." On March 17 Tokyo radio said that the Prime Minister would soon appoint seven notable representatives of commerce and industry as a panel of advisers to the Government "in

order to buttress our war-time structure" and give a new impulse to production. On March 22 the same station announced that :

"A conference of the Italian and German Ambassadors and the Japanese Foreign Minister, with officers from the military, naval and air forces" of all three Powers, had been held at the Foreign Ministry. Needless to say, "complete agreement of views was reached," and "various important questions connected with the co-operation of the three Powers against their common enemies were discussed."

But there was no sign of any Japanese aid to Germany in the shape of an attack or even a demonstration against Russia. On the contrary, a protocol extending the fisheries convention with the U.S.S.R. was understood to have been signed at Moscow during the quarter.

3 : NEW GUINEA AND THE SOLOMONS

(A.) NEW GUINEA, January 1-March 1, 1943

After the destruction of the Japanese garrison of Gona the position of the force holding Buna had been described as "hopeless," and the description was accurate. On January 2 American troops took the Buna Government station after a murderous fight in which 650 Japanese were killed and a few, with thirty-five impressed labourers, were captured. The Americans joined the Australians in surrounding and "softening" the resistance of a Japanese "pocket" at Giropa Creek while preparations were made for a combined attack on the last important Japanese position at Sanananda. Parties of Japanese who had escaped from Buna and Giropa before the ring closed were slowly hunted down and killed in the jungle, although a few may have escaped to Sanananda. Giropa was soon liquidated. A series of heavy air attacks on Sanananda prepared the way for the final attack on this strong position.

The Japanese made no attempt to relieve it. But they sought to reinforce their base at Lae at the head of the Huon Gulf. South-east of Lae they held Salamaua on the coast with outposts in the Mubo area, south-west of Salamaua, who were from time to time engaged with the Australians who had occupied Wau. Allied Head-

quarters reported (on January 8) that a convoy of ten ships had been attacked off Lae by Allied bombers and two transports had been sunk. In fact the attack was one of a series delivered by American and Australian aircraft operating from their bases in New Guinea, including Wau, between January 6 and January 10. The original convoy consisted of two cruisers, four destroyers and four transports, afterwards reinforced by two merchantmen. In spite of the constant support of Zero fighter aircraft from ten to twenty of which escorted



WEWAK TO RABAUL

the ships as they neared the New Guinea coast, three transports were set ablaze by bombs and were left behind, one of them beached, before the remaining ships entered Lae harbour. There they landed some troops and stores; but on the night of March 8 they left Lae, where they had stayed for less than twelve hours, and steamed back towards Rabaul. They were attacked by long-range bombers and two more ships were hit. The total of transports destroyed was not certainly ascertained, but it was considered probable that three had been sunk or burnt out, including one of about 14,000 tons.

But the enemy's loss was not confined to shipping.

Their aircraft, besides being heavily punished by the Allied bombers, were counter-attacked by long-range fighters on many occasions. Others again were bombed or machine-gunned on the aerodromes of Lae and Salamaua which, with the transports leaving Lae, were subjected to sixteen attacks during the night of January 8 and the morning of January 9. It was estimated that eighty-five Japanese aircraft, mostly fighters, had been certainly destroyed by the end of the five days and forty-five were classed as "probables" or damaged. Our own loss of aircraft was described as "light." Nor did this concentration against the convoy and the Lae and Salamaua landing-grounds and that at Madang on the coast, about 140 miles west-north-west of Lae, prevent our aircraft from striking out as far as Gasmata and Rabaul in New Britain, where they damaged enemy shipping, and to Timor and the Kei islands, where they sank a torpedo boat.

On January 10 General MacArthur, who had returned from the front, issued an order of the day in which he announced that he had decorated a number of senior officers of the Australian and American armies under his command with the Distinguished Service Cross, the highest honour at his disposal. He spoke most highly of the conduct of all ranks, "operating under difficulties rarely, if ever, surpassed in any campaign," and after enumerating the American and Australian ground troops engaged, he concluded :

"Of the American Fifth Air Force and the R.A.A.F., no commendation could be too great. Their outstanding efforts in combat, supply, and transportation over both land and sea constituted the keystone on which the whole arch of the campaign was erected. They have set new horizons for the air conduct of the war. To Almighty God I gave thanks for the guidance that brought us this success in our great crusade. His is the honour, the power and the glory, Amen."

On January 15 came news that the Allied forces had breached the ring of Japanese positions around Sanananda and had buried 122 enemy dead, and that the Australians had roughly handled the Mubo garrison in a two-days' action in which the Japanese left 116 dead behind. Allied Headquarters announced on January 18 that Allied

aircraft had done great damage to ships and installations at Rabaul on the night of January 16. On that date three waves of Flying Fortresses bombed transports and aerodromes and claimed to have hit five transports. At noon next day the Japanese made one of their strongest attacks for a long time when twenty-four Mitsubishi bombers escorted by twenty Zeros raided Milne Bay airfield, but did little damage and caused no casualties.

Sanananda, Cape Killerton, and Giruwa, the chief hostile positions in the Sanananda area, were reported seized on January 18 after stiff fighting, and the enemy were now confined to four small "pockets." Two of these were speedily cleared. The collapse of the main positions came astonishingly quickly. It was chiefly brought about by the Australians, "who ploughed through swamps into which they sometimes sank to their necks, but finally got firmly established on the coast behind the last remaining enemy defences." Nor were the Americans behind. Advancing westward along the coast, they also had to force their way through swamps or along a road flooded by the tides.

"The accuracy of the Australian artillery and of the American airmen's bombing was an important contribution to the capture of Sanananda. . . . Australian 25-pounders defeated attempts by enemy barges to land food for the garrison at Sanananda Point before the position was taken. Only a few bags of rice were left to the enemy.

Scores of Japanese . . . are wandering, lost, in the swamps and jungle round Sanananda, many of them pitifully under-nourished. . . . An enemy hospital captured in a swamp consisted of the flimsiest shelters set in the mud, but all the patients had grenades and knives, with which they tried to attack the Americans who took them prisoners. . . ."¹

On January 23 Allied Headquarters in Australia stated that all organized Japanese resistance in Papua had been overcome. "Mopping-up" was continuing, and 725 more enemy dead had been counted in addition to those previously reported.² Field-guns and much equipment had been captured with 117 prisoners, who surrendered at the end. General MacArthur, who had been repeatedly asked what he considered to be the principal lessons of

¹ Extracts from a message from the special correspondent of *The Times*, *loc. cit.* January 22.

² Apparently about 950 in number.

the Papuan campaign which had now been concluded, expressed the following views (*The Times*, January 24) :

The outstanding lesson of the campaign had been the continuous and calculated application of air-power, employed in the most intimate tactical and logistical union with ground troops. A new form of campaign was tested, and it pointed the way to the ultimate defeat of the enemy in the Pacific. The offensive and defensive power of the air, and the adaptability, range and capacity of its transport, in effective combination with ground forces, represented the tactical and strategical elements of a broadened conception of warfare. This would permit the application of offensive power in swift, massive strokes, rather than in the dilatory and costly island-to-island advance that some had assumed to be necessary in a theatre where the enemy's . . . strongholds were dispersed throughout a vast expanse of archipelagos. Air forces and ground forces were welded together in Papua and, when in sufficient strength and with proper naval support, their indissoluble union pointed the way to victory through new and broadened strategical and tactical conceptions.

Ground fighting in New Guinea was now confined to the Mubo district. During the last week in January the enemy advanced in the direction of Wau, but was repelled. The Wau airfield, situated in a deep hollow surrounded by mountains, was the chief Japanese objective though the enemy would, no doubt, have liked to capture the Morobe goldfields of which Wau was the centre. The Japanese reached Kaisinek, four and a half miles south-east of Wau, and Wandumi, seven and a half miles north-west thereof on January 22, but after a hard day's fighting they were expelled from the positions which they had taken and fell back, leaving a regimental commander and several staff officers on the field. The Australians received field-guns by air and were well supported by Allied aircraft. It was announced on February 2 that a Netherlands East Indies Army bombing squadron was now in action against the enemy in this theatre. On the following day A.H.Q. stated that since the close of the Buna-Sanananda campaign 158 Japanese stragglers had been killed or captured.

In spite of their repulse the Japanese soon renewed their attack on Wau. Their air force had been strongly reinforced, and on February 6 twelve medium bombers of the 99 type escorted by as many fighters attacked the airfield. Some American transport aircraft nearly ran into the attack, but they succeeded in getting safely back

to Port Moresby, while their escort of Kittyhawks and Airacobras engaged the enemy. The Kittyhawks which formed the lower "cover" of the transport aircraft engaged the enemy and shot five Zeros and two dive-bombers down. At the same time the Airacobras, flying at over 20,000 feet, intercepted another Japanese formation of some twenty-five machines approaching Wau and destroyed a dozen of them. More Japanese aircraft arrived and more air combats followed in which Lightning fighters were prominent. During the day's air fighting twenty-six enemy aircraft were brought down, twenty-four of them in combat, two by A.A. fire, while not a single Allied machine was lost. On the ground there were several collisions between strong patrols and the Japanese made further attempts to break through our defensive perimeter around the Wau airfield, losing over 100 more killed and accomplishing nothing. On February 13 they were definitely in retreat towards Mubo, and one of their rearguards, composed of sixty marines, was ambushed and lost thirty-two dead to the Australians. By the end of the month they were holding positions two miles from Mubo. From first to last their latest push towards Wau had cost them fully 600 men. At the same time the Allied troops in the Buna-Sanananda region pushed patrols to the mouth of the Kumusi River, destroying several parties of Japanese who had established themselves there, and methodically combed out the swamps and jungles near Buna, where more Japanese stragglers than had first been realized constituted a threat to our communications. By the end of February 660 had been killed and seventy-three had been captured,¹ not counting those liquidated near the Kumusi River.

Through the two months American, Australian and latterly Dutch aircraft had maintained a constant attack on Japanese ports, garrisons, ships and military installations in the wide area extending from Amboyna and southern Celebes to the Solomon Islands. The air operations in those islands will be described in the next

¹ Including a few of the 158 reported killed or taken alive from January 24 to February 2.

section of this chapter. It is impossible within the limits of this chronicle to give more than an outline of these harassing attacks which were directed against a large number of targets. The Japanese had by this time established themselves at several points in Dutch (Western) New Guinea as well as in the adjacent islands. They held Wewak and Madang on the northern coast of New Guinea west of Lae and had constructed airfields there. But their chief advanced base and shipping centre was still Rabaul, and Rabaul it was that endured most attacks by our long-range bombers.

On January 5 Allied bombers claimed to have destroyed "at least nine" ships in Rabaul harbour. It was the sixth and most effective raid since December 27. Bombs of 1,000 lbs. were used against eight medium-sized merchantmen and a destroyer tender of about 6,000 tons and a destroyer tied to the tender may have been sunk too. The attack was made in a series of waves by Liberators and Flying Fortresses at noon, and although the *flak* was heavy and fighter aircraft intervened, only one bomber failed to return, while six Zeros were shot into the sea. On January 9 Beaufort torpedo-bombers got torpedoes home on a warship, perhaps a light cruiser, off Gasmata in New Britain and may have destroyed her. Dobo, in the Aru Islands, was attacked on January 20 by medium bombers and one of three float-planes which attacked them was shot down. American heavy bombers raided Amboyna and Rabaul harbours on January 21. They hit a cruiser and a merchantman at Amboyna and shot down two of the Zeros which attempted to intercept the Flying Fortresses, Liberators and Catalinas and damaged others. Two merchantmen were hit at Rabaul. On the same day four heavy bombers visiting Wewak beat off a large force of Japanese aircraft and claimed to have destroyed a dozen of them. Then came a series of nocturnal raids on the aerodromes and harbour of Rabaul, in the course of which an ammunition ship blew up on January 24-25, and a large vessel was set on fire on the night of January 25. Gasmata, Fulloro aerodrome in Timor, Amboyna and Wewak were also

raided by small numbers of aircraft in the last week of January. On January 30 began another series of night attacks on Rabaul, which continued until the early hours of February 4, and Dobo, Markus Island in the Tenimber group and Gasmata were also raided by U.S., Australian and Dutch aeroplanes. Several Japanese aircraft which attempted to intervene were damaged or destroyed in these operations. Kendari in Celebes was attacked on February 8. Rabaul was harassed on February 12 and 13, and early on February 14 some thirty Fortresses and Liberators dropped over 50 tons of high explosive and over 3,500 incendiary bombs on the town and waterfront and did much damage. On February 15 over seventy Allied aircraft were "out." Fortresses dropped 38 tons of high explosive and 1,500 incendiary bombs on Rabaul and added to the fires which the preceding attack had left ; a transport was badly hit at Amboyna ; Dobo was left in ruins and Dilli (Timor) sustained much damage from three separate raids. A Liberator beat off twelve Zero fighters over Gasmata and destroyed three on February 18 when Dutch Mitchells also raided Dilli and ships were bombed or "strafed" off New Britain. The last week of February saw more raids on Rabaul, in the course of which two large ships were hit and a good-sized warship, while taking "evasive action" during an attack by Fortress bombers, ran aground on a reef. Various enemy-occupied places in New Ireland, Timor, northern and western New Guinea were attacked. The losses of the Allies in all these encounters were remarkably slight. The operations were on a small scale by comparison with those in Europe or North Africa, but their importance was high. They emphasized the ascendancy of the Australo-American air forces and the higher quality of their aircraft. Their fighters, if less manoeuvrable than the Japanese Zeros, could take far more punishment ; their bombers, especially the Fortresses and Liberators, out-classed the enemy's machines and inflicted heavy loss on the fighters which attacked them. Their pilots were generally too good for their opponents.

The Japanese made few counter-raids during this

period. Attacks on Port Moresby and Milne Bay were rare and ineffective. A single enemy aircraft, apparently from a submarine, flew over Sydney on the night of February 18-19, but made off when fired upon. It was thought in some quarters that the enemy had resolved to confine himself to the defensive in the air in the south-west Pacific until he had built up a strong reserve of machines and trained pilots.

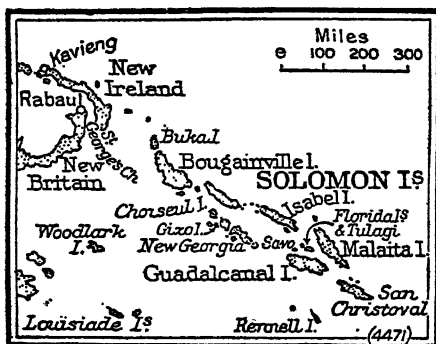
On February 18 Mr. Stimson, U.S. Secretary for War, announced that Lieutenant-General Walter Krueger has been appointed to command the newly-formed American Sixth Army in Australia and the south-west Pacific, but it was explained that this did not affect General Blamey's position as commander-in-chief of the Allies land forces in the area under General MacArthur's supreme command.

(B.) GUADALCANAL

January opened in the Solomons with a series of vigorous American air raids on the Japanese airfield at Munda on New Georgia Island. It was the best-appointed hostile air base in the northern Solomons, and was only 180 nautical miles from Guadalcanal, and the Americans therefore sought to restrict its use for attacks on that island by intensifying their raids. During the first fortnight of the year they made eight attacks on Munda and they also raided Kahili airfield near Buin, on Bougainville Island, 200 miles from Guadalcanal, and Rekata Bay on Santa Isabel, a frequent resort of Japanese ships. Meanwhile, surface craft, including motor torpedo-boats and destroyers, were engaged in watching for and repelling attempts by the enemy to bring supplies or reinforcements to their diseased and half-starved garrison on Guadalcanal, and the American troops on that island systematically searched for hostile detachments and destroyed those which they found. On January 3 they took a height whence the enemy had more than once shelled the Henderson aerodrome, killed 150 Japanese and captured a field-gun. On January 13 they opened

an offensive against the Japanese positions to the west of their aerodrome. They were well supported by artillery and bombing and strafing aircraft, and they reported that they had killed 1,032 Japanese in these operations, which were crowned by the capture of Mount Austen, the highest point near the aerodrome.

At sea Dauntless dive-bombers claimed to have set a destroyer on fire and to have left another in bad case north-west of Rendova Island in the New Georgia group on January 2. Early on January 5 U.S. surface ships appeared off Munda and shelled the airfield. As they



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drew off they were attacked by Japanese dive-bombers. Grumman Wildcats counter-attacked, shot down four Japanese machines and got away without loss after breaking up the enemy's formation. On the 11th Japanese Zeros which attacked an escorted force of Dauntless machines was broken up by the Wildcats with a loss of four fighters to one. On the previous night Japanese destroyers had appeared off Guadalcanal. American motor torpedo-boats attacked them and scored three certain hits, but the damaged vessels got away.

On January 21 the U.S. War Department and Navy Department announced that Major-General Alexander Patch had taken over the command of the American forces in Guadalcanal from Major-General A. A. Vander-

grift of the U.S. Marines, who had been in command since the original landing on August 7. General Vandergrift was decorated by the President with the Congressional Medal, the highest American decoration, for his remarkable services. Rear Admiral R. English, the commander of the submarine flotillas of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, was lost at sea in the fourth week of January, when the transport aeroplane conveying him and nine naval officers disappeared between Pearl Harbour and San Francisco.

The Japanese made no effective counter air-raids on the American islands during most of January. The Americans continued to raid through the month. Flying Fortresses attacked and hit a destroyer off Cape Friendship on January 20, and on the same day another group with fighter escort was attempting to bomb Japanese cargo ships and destroyers off the Shortland Islands, when a number of Japanese Zeros and float-planes intervened. Once again the Flying Fortresses showed their exceptional fire-power in an action in which one American fighter was lost, several Fortresses were damaged but returned to base, and eight of the attacking aircraft were destroyed. On January 22 General Patch's troops renewed their attack on Guadalcanal, aided by aircraft and warships, and by the 25th they had driven the enemy from the important Kokumbona village and beach, killed nearly 300 Japanese and captured three 6-inch and more than a dozen other guns. On that day many Japanese aircraft approaching Guadalcanal were intercepted by American fighters and driven off, losing four of their number. Hundreds of U.S. machines attacked Munda in relays on January 23, and on January 29 a Navy Department report told of further attacks, in the course of which five enemy ships were hit, including two destroyers, and ten aircraft shot down, against four U.S. aeroplanes reported missing. Further successes were also reported from Guadalcanal. But now the Japanese were nearing the island in strength. On February 1 they claimed, officially and mendaciously, to have sunk two American battleships and three cruisers in air attacks

on January 29 and 30. Late on February 2 the Navy Department issued the following statement :

"During the past several days there have been a number of surface and air actions between the United States and Japanese forces in the Solomon Islands. The increased activity on the part of the Japanese indicates a major effort to regain control of the entire Solomon area.

Both the United States and Japanese forces have suffered some losses. To reveal at this time details of these engagements would endanger the success of our future operations in this area."

An announcement on the night of February 4 referred to Japanese air attacks on American positions on Guadalcanal and to an advance by ground troops who captured "elevated positions" west of the Bonegi river and killed thirty-nine Japanese. It continued: "Details concerning recurrent engagements between United States air and surface forces and those of the enemy will not be announced so long as such information might jeopardize the safety of our forces. . . ."

No large-scale engagement followed the appearance of a strong Japanese naval force in the area, and for the next few days only "sporadic encounters" attended by moderate losses on both sides were announced by the Navy Department. But on February 9 Tokyo Radio issued an "Imperial Headquarters Report" on the evacuation of Guadalcanal and Buna. It claimed that after the Buna forces had accomplished their mission they had been withdrawn to other strategic points, and that the forces in Guadalcanal, after encircling powerful enemy forces which had landed there and "destroying their combative strength," had been transferred "in perfect order" to another point. It admitted the loss of 16,743 killed or dead of sickness and of 139 aircraft "which crashed themselves on enemy targets or are missing." It claimed that 25,000 enemy effectives had been "wiped out" and over 230 aeroplanes destroyed. On these statistics the U.S. Navy Department had some comments to make. It estimated the Japanese losses at 50,000, viz. : 30,000 killed or drowned in the naval engagements in mid-November, when eight transports had been destroyed, 9,000 killed or captured on the island and the balance killed in air-raids and the sinking of troop transports on various occasions. The enemy had lost 797 aircraft in the Solomons.

On February 14 the Navy Department issued a special report on the South Pacific front which, after describing

an air battle over the Shortland Island area on February 13, in which six U.S. aircraft and eight Zeros had been shot down, said that 6,066 Japanese had been killed on Guadalcanal since January 13 and 127 taken prisoners. The report also mentioned the construction, unknown to the Japanese, of an aerodrome in the heart of the jungle on Espiritu Santo Island in the New Hebrides group. Two officers and 152 marines, with 300 Melanesians, had done the work and completed the aerodrome, which proved most valuable during the subsequent operations, nine days before the landing on Guadalcanal on August 7. Although provisions and quinine ran short and malaria was rife there were no deaths among marines or native workers. On February 14 there was another air battle over the Shortland Island area in which the new Vought-Sikorsky Corsairs, long-range fighters, with a speed estimated at 400 m.p.h., had been engaged while escorting Liberator bombers in the company of Lightning fighters. The Americans claimed eleven Japanese machines and admitted the loss of eight. A cargo ship was bombed and hit.

On February 16 the Navy Department published a report on the week of sea and air fighting in the Solomons area which began on January 29. Here is a summary :

Late in January American reconnaissance aircraft located heavy units of the Japanese fleet, including battleships and aircraft-carriers in a 1,000-mile stretch of sea between Truk in the Carolines and the Solomon Islands. At the same time large numbers of enemy destroyers thrust into the Solomons and an unusually heavy concentration of aircraft was observed at all enemy bases in the New Britain-Solomon Islands area. It seemed possible that the Japanese Fleet might accept a decisive battle ; subsequent events, however, showed that the enemy was solely concerned with the evacuation of his remaining troops from Guadalcanal and interference with the landing of American troops and supplies there. Thus there was no action between heavy forces and naval operations were chiefly confined to the movements of destroyers under heavy air cover between Guadalcanal and the northern Solomons.

On the evening of January 29 the Japanese opened the attack with a torpedo-aircraft attack on the American cruiser and destroyer force protecting a troop convoy near Rennell Island, seventy miles south of Guadalcanal. The cruiser *Chicago* was damaged by aerial torpedoes and was taken in tow, first by another cruiser, then by a tug. Next afternoon she was attacked again by thirteen torpedo-aircraft. American aircraft shot down twelve of them, but the *Chicago* was hit and sank. The loss of life was not heavy.

On February 1 American bombers and fighters attacked a corvette, a destroyer and a cargo vessel in the Velia Gulf in the north-western Solomons and left all three afire. Next day American aircraft attacked four destroyers among the northern Solomons. Two destroyers were "believed to have been sunk" and a third was left burning. Ten Zeros attacked the American aeroplanes and each side lost two machines. At least twenty Japanese aircraft were lost in attacks on and near Guadalcanal that day against ten U.S. machines. That afternoon enemy dive-bombers escorted by Zeros sank an American destroyer between Cape Esperance and Savo Island.

During the night of February 1-2 American motor torpedo-boats attacked a force of some twenty destroyers which were approaching Guadalcanal. One destroyer was certainly sunk and probably two others. Three of the torpedo-boats were sunk. Next morning (February 2) Dauntless dive-bombers and Avenger torpedo-planes attacked sixteen destroyers off Kolombangara in the New Georgia group and hit one. That evening Flying Fortresses escorted by Lightnings and Warhawks set a large cargo ship on fire off Shortland Island. Twenty enemy fighters then attacked, but the Fortresses shot down nine and all the U.S. machines returned safely.

On the afternoon of February 4 American aircraft attacked a Japanese formation of some twenty destroyers 200 miles north of Guadalcanal. They sank one, damaged another and set a third on fire. In this attack they shot down seven Zeros, themselves losing six machines. In a second action Dauntless dive-bombers, escorted by Wildcats and Warhawks, attacked eighteen destroyers which were covered by Zeros, shot down ten Zeros and hit two destroyers. Four American machines were lost.

In this series of encounters the Japanese lost two destroyers sunk, six destroyers, a corvette and two cargo ships damaged, with sixty or sixty-one aircraft destroyed and seven probably destroyed. The Americans lost the heavy cruiser *Chicago*, the destroyer *Dehaven*, three motor torpedo-boats and twenty-two aircraft.

The Japanese suffered further losses in these waters in February. Several cargo ships were hit in the course of raids made during the third week of February by American aircraft. On the night of February 17 torpedo-aircraft attacked an Allied convoy south of Guadalcanal and were beaten off, losing five machines out of eight. But the enemy was now on the defensive, if only temporarily, in these islands, and he hoped to regain the initiative in New Guinea.

(C.) THE FATE OF A CONVOY.

The Japanese acknowledgment of defeat at Guadalcanal was soon followed by an even more impressive disaster. On March 1 the official announcement from General MacArthur's Headquarters contained the following statement :

"Our air reconnaissance during the past weeks reports constant and growing reinforcements in all categories of enemy strength in the island perimeter enveloping the upper half of Australia. The enemy seems to be concentrating his main effort in preparation on this front. Such an assemblage of major force indicates that he is taking up position in readiness."

Commenting on this statement the special correspondent of *The Times* in Australia said that the Japanese had for some months been consolidating and reinforcing their positions from Timor to Bougainville Island which formed their southern front facing Australia. He continued :

"It was recently estimated that the number of troops at present garrisoning Japan's new possessions in south-east Asia is, roughly, twice the number of troops originally required to occupy them. In New Guinea new bases have been built up at Wewak, Medang and Finschafen ; in New Britain frequent reports of Allied attacks on cargo ships indicate a considerable coastwise movement of men and supplies. The Japanese have also been busy constructing additional air bases, satellite grounds round each base, emergency landing strips, and so forth. Lastly, there is a sizable concentration of ships in Rabaul harbour, a certain proportion of which are warships. This concentration has varied both in size and composition during recent months, but it has never been small."

Whether these concentrations were being made in order to strengthen the chain of Japanese island positions against an Allied counter-attack or in preparation for an offensive against the Australian continent or those outlying positions, New Caledonia, the Fiji Islands, eastern Papua, which the Allies held. A consolidation of strength would be an obvious preliminary to any offensive move. Australian opinion, however, was inclined to expect defensive rather than offensive action from the enemy. The expectation was well founded.¹

On Monday, March 1, a Japanese convoy of fourteen vessels, warships and merchantmen, was sighted off the north-west coast of New Britain, heading towards the northern coast of New Guinea. It had evidently formed part of the concentration of ships observed at Rabaul. On

¹ Before the arrival of reinforcements the Japanese were believed to maintain the following forces in the region, two infantry divisions or their equivalent in the northern Solomons, two and a half divisions in New Guinea, three and a half divisions in New Britain and one division in Timor, making a total of nine divisions. One division had been destroyed in Papua. Remnants of another had been extricated from Guadalcanal.

the night of March 1 it was off the Willaumez Peninsula in New Britain, moving westwards under cover of advancing clouds and rain. Headquarters announced that the Allied air squadrons available would attack these ships if weather permitted. Next morning the attack began.

In spite of the bad weather the Allied aircraft were able to engage the convoy, now reinforced to a strength of ten warships and twelve transports and cargo ships, on the morning of March 2. By this time convoy and escort had entered the Vitiaz Strait to the north and north-east of Finschafen. They were protected by a screen of fighters which had presumably been flown out from Finschafen, Lae and Salamaua. Several ships, including some of the destroyers, were reported to be so full of troops that their upper decks were crowded.¹ Several ships were sunk or disabled during the day by the bombers, which made four attacks, on each occasion with fighter support, and a number of the enemy's aircraft were shot down. Wednesday, March 3, was a fine day. The surviving ships of the convoy had reached the Huon Gulf. They had been kept under observation throughout the night and occasionally attacked by Australian-manned Catalina flying-boats. They were clearly bound for Lae.

To prevent the intervention of Japanese aircraft from Lae, Havocs attacked the Lae landing-grounds. Larger formations then swooped down and bombed the transports almost from masthead height, setting several on fire. Next came an attack of Australian-manned and British-built Beaufighters, which maintained a heavy fire on the decks of the enemy ships with their machine-guns and cannon-guns. Later came still heavier attacks by Mitchell bombers, the "B 25s" which had played a great part in the attack on Tokyo and now inflicted great damage and loss upon the convoy and its escort. Fortresses in three waves followed and beat off a number of attacks by the Japanese fighter screen. Throughout this long

¹ It is not clear whether the ships sailed with troops crowding their upper decks—which would presumably have made it difficult to fight the destroyers' guns in case of attack—or whether the troops were ordered on deck when the bombing began in order to give them some chance of escape.

series of attacks Lightning fighters in strength gave cover to the bombers and claimed ten Japanese machines in a series of encounters fought between 15,000 feet and 25,000 feet above the sea, and Lightnings and Kittyhawks engaged the enemy again above Lae and shot seven down.

By nightfall on March 3 General MacArthur's headquarters knew that the Allies had won a resounding success with scarcely any loss to themselves. On the following morning they issued the following announcement :

"The battle of the Bismarck Sea is now decided. We have achieved a victory of such completeness as to assume the proportions of a major disaster to the enemy. His entire force has been practically destroyed. His naval component consisted of 22 vessels, comprising 12 transports and 10 warships—cruisers or destroyers.¹ They represented a tonnage estimated at approximately 90,000 tons. They have all been sunk or are sinking."

"His air coverage for this naval force has been decimated and dispersed. Fifty-five of his aircraft have been shot down in combat and many others damaged. His ground forces, estimated at probably 15,000, destined for an attack on New Guinea, have been sunk or killed almost to a man.

The original convoy of fourteen ships was joined by eight other vessels. Our air force in all categories constantly attacked throughout the day and ship after ship was hit again and again with heavy bombs from a low altitude. The enemy air coverage became weaker and weaker, his forces more scattered and dispersed, and finally his remnants, isolated and bewildered, were gradually annihilated by our successive air formations as we sent them into combat. Our losses were light. One bomber and three fighters were shot down. A number of others were damaged but returned to base.

Our decisive success cannot fail to have the most important results on the enemy's strategic plans. His campaign, for the time being at least, is completely dislocated."

Commenting on the battle, General MacArthur said : "A merciful Providence guarded us in this great victory." The surviving Japanese found no mercy. On March 4 reconnoitring aircraft located two disabled destroyers which were attacked and sunk. On that and the following day American Mitchells and Australian Beaufighters made wide sweeps over the Huon Gulf "mopping up" the remnants of the expedition who were trying to reach land in barges, lifeboats and rafts.

"Nearly every ship in the convoy carried these craft in order to land troops at their destination, and it is now established that they even carried

¹ Described officially later as three light cruisers and seven destroyers. But Japanese destroyers of the larger types and light cruisers were bafflingly alike when seen from the air.

logs tied with rope for the same purpose. One aircraft reported that it had sighted three lifeboats containing 300 Japanese. Its message concluded : 'there were no survivors.' One Mitchell . . . observed fifteen rafts and boats with Japanese aboard. Many were wearing green battledress. Another aircraft destroyed four barges loaded with supplies and carrying twenty-five men. . . . As on the previous day, many sharks were noticed swimming round the rafts. In only one instance was enemy fire reported ; as one aircraft strafed a lifeboat the Japanese in it replied with machine-gun fire."¹

On March 7 Allied Headquarters, Australia, issued a further statement, the most important passages in which were the following :

"In the battle of the Bismarck Sea, which ended yesterday, approximately 136 of our aircraft took part. The enemy used approximately 150 aircraft, of which 102 were definitely seen to have been put out of action. Our aircraft dropped 226 tons of bombs. Eighty direct hits were observed and 63 near misses or hits." After giving the Allied losses, one heavy bomber and three fighters shot down, "a number" seriously damaged and another with minor damage, of which only the four shot down had not returned, and the composition of the enemy's convoy and escort, all of which were sunk, the announcement continued : "The ground forces which the enemy attempted to land, the strength of which is estimated at 15,000, are now identified as probably of the 51st and 20th divisions, with certain other special troops. All perished." Of the 102 enemy aircraft put out of action 63 were confirmed to have been destroyed. This estimate included machines destroyed on Lae aerodrome.

Few Japanese appear to have reached the northern coast of New Guinea. An official report issued on March 9 stated that fifty-five men had landed sixty-seven miles south-east of Buna. All were killed or captured. Another group of forty-two landed on Goodenough Island, 20 miles from the Huon Gulf. Most were killed by Australian patrols. A few were captured. Later, several more barges full of survivors drifted to Goodenough Island and the Trobriand group off north-east Papua, the last on March 17. Some showed fight and about a hundred were killed. The rest, on discovering that their lives would be spared, surrendered. One group bowed to their captors and sang "Auld Lang Syne" in fair English ! A singular people.

The defeat and destruction of the expedition had been a great triumph for the 5th American Army Air Force. The lesson which it taught was plain. Command, or at least a large measure of command, of the air was essential

¹ The special correspondent of *The Times*, *loc. cit.* March 8.

for any expeditionary force undertaking a landing in or near territory exposed to hostile air bombing. From such attack cruisers and destroyers unprovided with an adequate "air umbrella" could not hope to escape themselves, still less to protect the transports which they were escorting. Battleships might have a far better chance of survival under bombing,¹ but they were vulnerable to torpedo-carrying aircraft as the destruction of the *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* had shown. At the same time, the long distance which the Japanese convoy and escort had to cover across waters open to observation by the relatively strong air force under General MacArthur's command had given the defence exceptional advantages. These would not necessarily be enjoyed by Axis forces defending the coasts of France, Crete or Sicily against an Allied descent.

In spite of this disaster the Japanese made another attempt to reinforce their positions in New Guinea. On March 13 an Allied reconnaissance aircraft reported that a convoy of five Japanese merchantmen, escorted by three destroyers, was approaching Wewak harbour in northern New Guinea from the north-east. After dark Fortress bombers attacked the convoy when it was still forty miles from the coast and claimed direct hits on a large transport which was set on fire, and one hit on a 4,000-ton tanker. It was stated on the same day that two such convoys of equal strength had been seen on March 11, east of Manus Island in the Admiralty group, steaming north-west. One of these may have changed direction and turned southwards towards Wewak, and it was thought that the Japanese, finding the Rabaul-Finschafen route too exposed, were trying a more circuitous northern route to their bases in New Guinea. There was also evidence of Japanese activity in Dutch New Guinea where several cargo ships were attacked by Liberators on March 13.

Later reports from the Fifth A.A.A.F.² showed that a

¹ Pearl Harbour was a surprise of stationary battleships which had no air cover worth mentioning owing to the successful Japanese raid on the neighbouring aerodromes.

² American Army Air Force.

destroyer had been hit and that the transport and the tanker respectively reported on fire and sinking had disappeared. Liberators could not find the convoy and it was thought that the remaining ships had landed part of the reinforcements at Wewak and had then sought safer waters. At the same time there was evidence that the Japanese were concentrating to the west of New Guinea. An official report from A.H.Q. on March 15 contained the following statement :

"Our air reconnaissance shows a growing concentration of enemy transports and cargo ships in the Ambon (Amboyna)-Dobo¹ area to the north-west of Australia. The enemy's ground forces there are being reinforced and new airfields are being constructed."

These preparations, like those observed at other points in the Japanese arc, might equally well be offensive or defensive. On the morning of March 15 reconnaissance aircraft sighted three small Japanese transports making for Dobo from the north. Dutch Mitchells and Australian Hudsons and Beaufighters bombed and strafed the transports, causing heavy damage to two of them and killing many of the troops on their decks. One of our aircraft was lost. On the same morning the Japanese made their first raid on Darwin since March 2, with twenty-five medium bombers escorted by twenty-four fighters. They were engaged by British and Australian-manned Spitfires after they had dropped bombs, which did little damage on the town and harbour. Six Zero fighters and a bomber were certainly destroyed, nine fighters and three bombers were damaged or "probables." We lost four Spitfires, but two pilots were saved.

The presence of Spitfire squadrons in the Australian battle area had been disclosed by Mr. Curtin on March 4. The Australian Prime Minister warmly thanked Mr. Churchill and the British Government for sending these squadrons. The idea had been Mr. Churchill's. Mr. Curtin explained that the dispatch of these squadrons, which he described as a splendid expression of the idea of mutual support among the nations of the British Commonwealth, had been the result of a special arrangement

¹ Dobo is a port in the Aru Islands.

between Mr. Churchill and Dr. Evatt during the latter's previous visit to Great Britain. Mr. Curtin explained that one of the objects of Dr. Evatt's mission was to present the case for increased air strength on the Australian front. The form of the contribution was determined by Mr. Churchill himself. While he recognized that for geographical and strategical reasons the primary responsibility for the south-west Pacific area should rest on the United States, he made it clear that this in no way lessened Great Britain's interest in the security of Australia.

"Mr. Curtin explained that the Spitfires had been in Australia for some time but their presence had been kept secret to make the most of the element of surprise. This aim had been realized. On March 2 Spitfires had taken part in the interception of an enemy force over Darwin, crushingly defeating the Japanese aircraft. The enemy lost six out of a total raiding force of fifteen machines. The crews of the Spitfires included members of the R.A.F. as well as pilots of the R.A.A.F. trained under the Empire scheme, who had fought in many battles against the *Luftwaffe* and gained a high reputation. The squadrons had come to Australia as complete units, bringing their own ground staff and all equipment. The machines . . . were specially adapted to tropical conditions."¹

On March 18 Allied patrols exploring the delta of the Mambare River, found a strong beachhead position which the Japanese had prepared for the reception of a strong force and had then abandoned, presumably when they had given up hope of retaining the Buna-Sanananda positions. On the same day Madang, an important Japanese air base, on the northern coast of New Guinea, was heavily bombed by Liberators. A Liberator on offensive reconnaissance over Ambon on the same day was attacked by no less than ten Japanese fighters, but escaped after a hard fight, having shot down four. On March 21 a small Japanese convoy leaving the occupied port of Kaimena, in Dutch New Guinea, was attacked by medium bombers near Cape van den Bosch and three enemy ships were attacked by a heavy bomber off Cape Namariti on the New Guinea coast just north of the Aru Islands. Mubo was heavily bombed and strafed by Bostons and Beaufighters on March 24, when ships and ports occupied by Japanese detachments in Dutch New

¹ The Canberra correspondent of *The Times*, *loc. cit.*, March 5.

Guinea were also attacked. The approaches to Lae and Salamaua from Madang, which passed along the coast through rough country, were heavily bombed on several occasions, since there was evidence that the enemy was unwilling to risk merchantmen in the Huon Gulf within short range of our aircraft, and that he was attempting to supply the Lae force by land. Another proof of his reluctance to risk merchant tonnage off this dangerous coast was his use of at least one submarine for transport. This vessel was caught while unloading stores into barges off Lae on March 19 and was sunk by Mitchell bombers.

On March 28 the Japanese made the heaviest bomber raid yet launched against New Guinea. They attacked Oro Bay, to the south-east of Buna, with twenty-five medium bombers, fifteen dive-bombers and many fighters. They sank a small ship and damaged another, but they were then intercepted and scattered by Kittyhawks and Lightnings, which destroyed six dive-bombers and nineteen fighters with slight loss. On the same day Allied aircraft raided many points in New Guinea and the Kei and Aru Islands.

Before March was out the Japanese made yet another attempt to reinforce their troops in New Guinea.

On March 29 a group of destroyers was sighted south-east of Kavieng (New Ireland). Its fighter screen attacked the Allied aircraft and this circumstance and bad weather prevented them from attacking until very early on March 30 when the enemy ships were detected five miles east of Finschafen. Flying Fortresses attacked and hit a large destroyer, which may have been sunk. The remaining ships ran north at top speed. At dawn Fortresses and Bostons with Lightning fighter escort shot up Finschafen, doing much damage. The convoy was seen shortly before noon that day north-east of Cape Gloucester. While shadowing from New Britain a single Liberator was thrice attacked by formations of enemy fighters and beat off all attacks, shooting down four opponents. Our aircraft also attacked New Britain, sinking a small coastal vessel, and strafed and bombed Lae aerodrome, Salamaua town and barges off Madang.

Reconnaissances had now proved that the Japanese had constructed a road between Wewak and Madang and American aircraft bombed it heavily on March 30, and on the same day others raided the oil port of Babo, near the western extremity of Dutch New Guinea, causing

huge fires, while medium bombers bombed and strafed Timaka aerodrome, also in Dutch territory which the enemy had occupied.

After the Japanese had abandoned their attempt to recover Guadalcanal the U.S. Army and naval aircraft continued to harass their many positions in the Solomons and in the neighbouring groups of islands. Some of their attacks on Rabaul, the enemy's most important forward base in the south-west Pacific area, have already been described. In March they repeated these attacks and likewise devoted great attention to the airfield at Kahili on Bougainville Island, to Munda (New Georgia), which had been raided nearly a hundred times by the end of March, and Vila on Kolombangara Island in the Central Solomons. On the night of March 5-6 after Buin, on the south-east of Bougainville Island, and Munda had been bombed by day, U.S. light craft raided and bombarded Munda and Vila. The Japanese light surface forces tried to drive them off but were themselves repulsed, losing two destroyers. The Japanese had constructed three airfields in the Rabaul area of New Britain and in pursuance of their policy of building up a powerful air force in the region they had landed or flown a great number of new aircraft there by March 23. That night Flying Fortresses in three waves attacked the three enemy aerodromes at Lakunai, Nanakanau and Rapopo. They dropped fifty-four tons of bombs, some of the 2,000-lb. type, on dispersal areas, runways, installations and gun and searchlight positions for an hour and a half. Over 250 light and medium bombers, single-seater fighters and other aircraft—a disturbingly large number—were seen crowded on the ground and a substantial number of them were damaged or destroyed. The Fortresses, though several were damaged, all returned safely. On the way back one group encountered a 10,000-ton transport off Cape Gazelle and set her on fire. Liberators made another raid before dawn on March 26, using 2,000-lb. bombs on the Rabaul waterfront and causing great fires. Next day the Liberators made an unexpected attack on Nauru Island, 675 miles

from Guadalcanal, where they started four fires, hit the officers' quarters and barracks and damaged several aeroplanes. Lightning and Corsair fighters attacked the enemy's seaplane base at Faisi in the Shortland group on March 28, setting six aircraft on fire, and the same group carried out a low-level attack on a Japanese destroyer off Alu Island (two miles south-east of Shortland Island) and left her on fire. All the U.S. machines returned safely, although one had lost three feet of one wing on the destroyer's mast.

4 : OTHER OPERATIONS IN THE PACIFIC

The first operation recorded in the Aleutian Islands during the quarter was the destruction by Mitchell bombers of a cargo ship 110 miles north-east of Kiska Island on January 5. There were several air-raids on Kiska in January and February, and on February 19 American warships shelled Japanese positions on Attu. On March 3 the Navy Department said that in nine attacks (apparently since the New Year) American aircraft had dropped more than 2,000 bombs and had shot down ten Japanese aircraft without loss. Several grounded aircraft were damaged by an American air-raid on the Kiska aerodrome on March 13. On March 15 bombers of the U.S.A.A.F., supported and covered by Lightnings and Warhawks, made six attacks on Japanese installations on Kiska and next day three more attacks were launched, in the course of the second of which Japanese aircraft trying to intercept were engaged by an equal number of Lightning fighters and lost two of their number. On March 25 Kiska was raided four times, which brought the number of attacks in March to twenty-five. The Secretary of the Navy disclosed in March that the Japanese, who had long depended on carrier-borne aircraft or on seaplanes at Kiska, had been constructing an airfield there. The Americans had been able to operate from their base on the Andreanof Islands. On March 28 the U.S. Navy Department issued an announce-

ment that light American warships patrolling west of Attu Island, the westernmost of the Aleutians,

"made contact with a Japanese force composed of two heavy cruisers, two light cruisers, four destroyers and two cargo ships. The enemy force was headed eastward towards the Aleutians. Gunfire at long range was exchanged. When the engagement was broken off the Japanese forces were observed heading westward."

No further news was published about this action during the month. The Navy Department stated that further details would be published when such information would not be useful to the enemy. It was made known a little later that the Japanese attempts to open a submarine campaign in the North Pacific had not been particularly successful. The fogs and storms of these seas were far from favourable to submarine warfare.

Wake Island, in the central Pacific, was visited by American reconnaissance aircraft on January 25. They were attacked by eight Zeros, but returned without loss and claimed two of the attackers. No other operations were known to have taken place in this part of the Ocean.

The submarines of the U.S. Navy added many victims to their long list during the quarter. Brief records of their achievements in Pacific and Far Eastern waters were published at intervals. Here are summaries :

January 19. *Sunk* : one destroyer, one large and one medium-sized cargo ship, a transport and a small patrol vessel. *Damaged* : a large tanker and a small cargo vessel.

January 31. *Sunk* : a destroyer, a tanker, four medium-sized cargo vessels. *Damaged* : a medium-sized cargo vessel.

February 17. *Sunk* : one escort vessel, a tanker, two cargo ships, and a medium-sized transport. *Damaged and probably sunk* : a cruiser.

March 2. *Sunk* : three medium-sized cargo ships, a medium-sized tanker, and a small schooner. *Damaged* : a medium-sized transport and a medium-sized tanker.

March 16. *Sunk* : one destroyer, a large transport, and a large and a medium-sized cargo vessel. *Damaged* : two cargo vessels, one medium-sized and one small, and a medium-sized tanker.

April 4. *Sunk* : one destroyer, a large transport and two medium-sized freighters. *Probably sunk* : a medium-sized freighter. *Damaged* : a destroyer and a medium-sized freighter.¹

The U.S. submarine *Argonaut* (2,710 tons) was reported missing on patrol operations and presumably lost

¹ These ships had almost certainly been sunk or damaged during the preceding month and are therefore included here.

(February 21). She was the largest submarine in the U.S. Navy. No other American submarines appear to have been lost during the quarter, during which the Japanese suffered shipping casualties from their attacks which were known to have alarmed and irritated the authorities at Tokyo. In March the total losses of the Japanese mercantile marine from Allied aerial and naval attacks were estimated at 1,800,000 tons.

Shortly afterwards the military spokesman of Allied Headquarters in Australia entered a necessary *caveat* against exaggerated estimates of the effect of these shipping losses on Japanese military capacity.¹ He said that against this loss of 1,800,000 tons of shipping must be set an estimated total of 475,000 tons captured or obtained from neutrals or non-belligerents and of 450,000 tons of new construction since the outbreak of war. This would reduce Japanese shipping loss to 875,000 tons net. The military spokesman added :

"Pressure on Japanese commercial shipping, which undoubtedly exists, should be attributed not only to these losses, but in large measure to the ever-increasing demands on shipping for the consolidation and exploitation of the vast resources of the enormous empire . . . which the enemy has seized. On the front in the South-West Pacific area there has been no indication of any lack of commercial shipping. For months, from Rabaul on one flank to Surabaya on the other, menacing concentrations of shipping have been continually reported by our air reconnaissance. At Rabaul alone over 300,000 tons have been repeatedly noted. Only the great distances of these centres from our air bases have secured them from our air attacks. It would be a grave fallacy to believe that even the heavy destruction which has been caused by our naval and air power has dangerously weakened the enemy's capacity for sea transport, inherent in his command of internal sea lanes within the sphere of his overseas operations."

The military spokesman said that the figure of 450,000 tons for new construction did not include small wooden ships which Japan had been building with great energy, as Japanese broadcasts had shown, in French Indo-China, Malaya and the Indies. These small craft were most useful for coastal and inter-island work and the Japanese depended largely on them for the supply of their scattered garrisons. Allied raids on Rabaul, the chief Japanese shipping centre in the South-West Pacific area, had been limited in their effectiveness because they had to be made at night. The distances were too great for long-range fighters to cover day raiders.

Coupled with Mr. Churchill's allusions to the Far Eastern War and his assumption that decisive operations against Japan might have to wait until Germany had

¹ The special correspondent of *The Times* in Australia, *loc. cit.*, March 20.

been broken, this warning was designed to prepare Americans and Australians alike for a long struggle with Japan. There was an obvious danger, to which Admiral Helfrich, the commander-in-chief of the Netherlands forces in the Far East, drew attention at a meeting of war correspondents on March 20. He said that although the Japanese seemed now to be preoccupied with defence, they would not content themselves with defensive operations. More was required to secure the command of the sea which was the first condition of a successful Allied advance.

"If the Allies do not have the resources to concentrate on more than one theatre at a time ; if it is wisest to concentrate on Germany first, then we must not forget that by our giving inadequate forces to this area Japan may become so strong that it will become increasingly difficult, perhaps impossible, to launch a successful offensive against her."

The warning applied equally to the Japanese position in the Philippines, the Aleutians and wherever else the enemy had established himself. But at the end of March it became known that as a result of the conferences being held at Washington, to which the American commanders in the different areas of the Pacific were summoned to meet the American Chiefs of Staff, General MacArthur and, no doubt, other commanders were likely to have more naval and air support. Whatever disappointment Australians, Americans, British and Dutch may have felt at the prospect of the postponement of the decisive struggle with Japan, the prospect of the arrival of substantial reinforcements enabled them to bear the delay with greater patience and more confident hope.

CHAPTER VI

THE AMERICAS

I : IN THE UNITED STATES

While the relations between the U.S. and the Latin-American nations, with the important exception of Argentina, were marked by friendship and confidence, and Brazil and Mexico were the allies of the Great Republic, American diplomacy failed to detach the French Admiral Robert from Vichy. On March 23, indeed, the Secretary of the Navy, Colonel Knox, said flatly that the Admiral's stubbornness in refusing to reach a settlement with the U.S. was causing bitterness in Martinique and Guadeloupe, and made it plain that American patience was exhausted, and that the islands were no longer receiving American supplies. A somewhat amusing complication arose in French Guyana in March. The inhabitants having ousted their Governor, M. René Weber, by a *coup d'état*, in which the garrison took part, appear to have announced their adhesion both to General de Gaulle and to General Giraud. Both Generals appointed Governors of the colony. The State Department maintained silence on the matter, as did the two French missions in Washington, and at the end of the quarter it was not clear who was to govern Guyana.

On February 15 Vice-Admiral Fénard, the head of the French Naval Mission in Washington, announced that the battleship *Richelieu*, the cruiser *Montcalm*, and many destroyers had arrived safely in U.S. ports to be refitted. The *Richelieu's* crew were acclaimed when they paraded in New York, but in March the Secretary of the Navy gave out the disconcerting news that a number of them had deserted to the Free French.

War Production On January 5 Mr. Roosevelt told the Press that the exact total of shipbuilding in 1942 was 8,090,800 tons, **A. Ship-** not counting about 800 small craft, and that at the end of **ping**

1942 four ships were being completed daily. By May five would be delivered daily.

On February 8 Admiral Land, Chairman of the Maritime Commission, said that most of their large troop movements would not be possible but for the large British troop-carrying steamers and their assistance would be extensively required during 1943. By means of the Combined Shipping Adjustment Board Americans and British had worked out a scheme for mutual aid in shipping, each Government drawing on its own pool of shipping. The British Government had placed about £1,000,000 to the account of the War Shipping Administration for such services. The shipbuilding programme for 1943 was 18,890,000 tons, and on the basis of building programmes and estimated losses the U.S. should surpass the British aggregate tonnage by midsummer. On March 5 the Maritime Commission announced record shipbuilding figures for February. The yards had delivered in 28 days 130 vessels totalling 1,239,000 deadweight tons, which brought up the total for the first two months of 1943 to 2,247,000 tons.

Colonel Knox made several important statements during the quarter. At the beginning of February he described the situation in the Atlantic as "still serious," owing to the Navy's lack of sufficient material for the anti-U-boat campaign. On February 23 he announced that the first American battleship of 45,000 tons, the *Iowa*, had been completed seven months ahead of schedule.

B. Naval Expansion

On March 5 he stated that during February 150 vessels of operational value with 700 landing barges and 1,400 naval aircraft, had been produced, and "several score" escort vessels of a new type had been launched. On March 26 he informed the Press that the United States now had "dozens" of new auxiliary aircraft-carriers in service, and that "scores" were being constructed. A substantial number of the aircraft now in use in the North African theatre had been conveyed across the Atlantic in these carriers. Their speed and complement were less than those of normal aircraft-carriers, but they and the rapidly increasing fleet of escort vessels would greatly strengthen the defence of convoys carrying food, and munitions across the oceans.

Gigantic figures of Army strength in 1943 and 1944 had been proposed by Army officers and approved by individual Senators, but it was soon realized by most Congressmen and by reasoning members of the public that the suggested total of 13,500,000 approximately would leave a smaller margin of workers in industry and agriculture than was prudent. On January 19 Mr. R. P. Patterson, Under-Secretary for War, addressed the

C. Army Expansion

graduating class at West Point, the famous Military Academy of the United States. The country, he said,

could perfectly well do its full share of fighting and still produce the munitions and food required by its Allies. The military would have to decide how large an army was needed. An Army of 7,500,000 men with other services would call for a total of 10,000,000 under arms, "not too big a force" for the country to support. "We cannot leave the hard work of fighting to the British, Russians and Chinese, and a war like this cannot be fought without an army and navy adequate for the task." In general the new divisions formed in 1943 would be prepared for transport oversea in 1944. The U.S. would build "the most powerful striking force from the air that the world has known," and he promised that the aircraft of new design already on the production lines would be more than a match for German aeroplanes. On February 13 the Director of Selective Service and the Chairman of the War Man-Power Commission, broadcast an announcement that four million additional men would be needed for the armed forces in 1943. The great majority of physically fit men of from 18 to 38 years of age, except farmers, would have to join up.

On February 25 Mr. Nelson told the Press that he considered that an armed force of 11,000,000 men could be equipped and maintained by the end of 1943 without excessive pressure on civilian economy. He was also reported to have told a Committee of Congress that 2,500,000 workers were still required to achieve and maintain the existing production goals. On March 9 Mr. R. P. Patterson stated that during February 8,000 aircraft cannon-guns, 2,000 A.A. guns, 7,800 weapon-bearing fighting vehicles, 1,244,000,000 cartridges and some 2,000,000 high-explosive shells had been turned out. During the first two months of 1943 5,000 tanks had been produced.

On the same day the Secretary for War broadcast on the subject of the national military requirements. He called for an army 8,200,000 strong, including 700,000 officers, by the end of the year. This total seemed to represent the final decision of the Government. The number would include an Air Force of about 2,500,000 of all ranks.

He said that in Europe estimates of the forces of the Germans and their allies showed about 14,000,000 men under arms, a much superior strength to that of Britain and Russia. The Japanese had more than 3,000,000 men. American plans were to form about 100 divisions of ground troops plus the usual auxiliary units. He gave Germany about 300 divisions,¹ Italy

¹ The number for Germany seemed exaggerated and it was suggested that draft-finding divisions forming a "pool" in the Reich had been counted

80 and Japan 86, and Germany's European satellites might have 80 more. A great American Army was being formed for offensive purposes. "If we should halt this great training establishment," he added, "we should deal a heavier blow to our hopes of a complete final victory than by any loss which we are likely to sustain on the field of battle."

The 8th Report of the War Production Board was issued on March 20 by Mr. Nelson.

It showed that there had been an increase of 8 per cent over the January output and of 6 per cent over the December output¹ in the production of munitions during February. Production of aircraft had been 10 per cent higher in February than in January and the production of four-engined bombers in that month had been 36 per cent higher than in January and 20 per cent higher than in December.

Several official statements on "Lend-Lease" were made during the quarter. On January 20 Mr. Stettinius, the U.S. Lend-Lease Administrator, issued figures showing the increasing dispatch of American supplies and arms to Russia. He said that

Lend-Lease

up to January 1, 1943, the United States had shipped over 3,200 tanks under lend-lease to Russia. America had sent Russia about 2,600 aeroplanes. On the same date the United Kingdom had supplied Russia with over 2,600 tanks and over 2,000 aeroplanes on the same basis. Up to December, 1942, the cumulative value of lend-lease goods was \$8,253,000,000, of which 79 per cent was for arms, munitions and the like and 21 per cent for services rendered. American production of munitions had increased more rapidly than shipments abroad, and during the last six months only 15 per cent of American munitions production had been sent abroad. Food supplies for Russia were of vital importance in the Lend-Lease programme. America must also be prepared to meet new demands from the occupied territories as they were liberated.

On January 29 Mr. Stettinius told the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives that

"the principle of lend-lease was 'total co-operation among the nations in waging this war.' " If there were any question to debate about it, it was "the question why we have not sent more to our Allies," not "whether we should continue to send supplies to them." Help to Russia so far was valued at \$1,250,000,000, and future food shipments would, he expected, exceed greatly lend-lease food shipments to all other parts of the world. Speaking of the results of co-operation he showed that 168 aircraft flown by American pilots during the North African landings were Spitfires supplied to the U.S. by Great Britain under reciprocal lend-lease. The

as operational forces. The heavy losses of the Hungarians and Rumanians made it certain that the estimate of 80 divisions for the satellite states greatly exceeded their real strength.

¹ December had been a record month because of the clean-up of the assembly lines at the end of the year.

British had also supplied artillery, hospitals, ambulances, etc., and the greater part of the naval escort of the transports.

On March 1 Mr. Stettinius made a statement to the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate on exchanges of goods on a lend-lease basis between the United Nations. He gave further details of British material assistance to the U.S. forces in Great Britain and North Africa and of the supplies provided to those in Australia and New Zealand by the Dominion Governments. But his most interesting (and ominous) statements concerned supplies for Russia. Great Britain had sent great quantities of arms to the Soviet Union and the British and Americans had together supplied 5,600 aeroplanes, 6,200 tanks and 85,000 military motor-vehicles, but most of the weapons used by the Red Army were Russian-made. "We must do everything we can to send more." The food situation in Russia was now "critical," and the United States expected to send more food there in 1943 than to Great Britain. He also said that eight complete industrial plants had been taken over by the Government for shipment under the Lend-Lease programme. India had two and the U.S.S.R. and Australia three each.

On March 6 Mr. Stettinius gave figures of the shippings of metal and chemicals to the U.S.S.R. up to February 1. These included 580,000 tons of steel, 94,000 tons of copper and brass, 50,000 tons of toluol and T.N.T., and 268,000 tons of petrol products. Other supplies included 99,000 military vehicles other than tanks, over 72,000 lorries and 3,000,000 pairs of army boots.

It was largely due to the efforts and explanations of Mr. Stettinius that Congress accepted the extension of Lend-Lease almost unanimously. The Administrator had shown that it was saving the country millions of dollars and thousands of tons of shipping. On March 10 the House of Representatives passed the Bill extending the Lend-Lease Act for a year by 407 votes to 6, and on March 11 the Senate passed it unanimously.

It may be noted here that the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate, while it unanimously approved the extension of the Lend-Lease Act, expressed its belief in its report to the House that the Act gave no authority warranting "any general post-war commitments or post-war policies in the agreements" made under the terms of the Act.

In his 8th Quarterly Report to Congress, Mr. Stettinius gave figures showing the vast extent of the transactions carried out under Lend-Lease and the proportion of American manufactured or produced goods that had been transferred to other nations. He said that during the second year of Lend-Lease supplies had been sent more to the Middle and Far East and to Russia and less to the United Kingdom. During the first two months of 1943 the principal new trends had been (a) an increase of shipments to Russia, especially of food; (b) the assignment of more aeroplanes to the India-China supply route; (c) the shipment of arms to the French in North Africa.

On January 25 the Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. Wickard, and Mr. Paul McNutt, War Man-power Commissioner, told the country that 3,500,000 more workers must be placed on the farms when the seasonal peak was reached in the summer. Unless they could be found the goals set for food production in 1943 could not be reached. There had been 8,900,000 agricultural workers in the U.S. in December, but the total would have to be brought up to 12,000,000 by volunteers chiefly from the towns. He disclosed the disagreeable fact that agriculture had lost 3,000,000 hands during the last two years.

On the same day Mr. Wickard issued his annual report to the President. In it he told civilians plainly that they would have to make further "adjustments" in their eating habits in 1943.

The exceptionally good growing weather of 1942 and the tremendous activity of the farmers had produced record crops on an acreage "close to the practicable limit." Even so production did not entirely meet demands, and this year the gap would be wider for military and Lease-Lend needs would take 20 per cent of the total production and they could not count on a recurrence of bumper crop weather. Farmers faced a labour shortage and smaller supplies of fertilizer and the shortage of farm machinery had reached a point necessitating an extensive rationing programme for 1943. He advocated some form of wage control which would prevent farm labour from being drained away to the cities through competitive wage-bidding, which was now threatening the "food for freedom" drive. The victories of the United Nations must be consolidated through the rapid relief of famine. Government direction of agriculture should be extended into the post-war period, since peace would temporarily increase the food responsibilities of the United Nations and especially of the United States.

There were signs of coming trouble in the coal-mining industry. John Llewelyn Lewis, the redoubtable chief of the United Mine Workers, a man of domineering personality, great ambition, inveterate dislikes (extended to all who disagreed with him), a thin skin and a choleric temper,¹ regarded the war as a maddening obstacle to his plan of making his already strong union the most powerful in the United States. He detested President Roosevelt who, he considered, owed much to his support in the Presidential election of 1936 and had requited him ill by failing to consult him after his re-election.

¹ This Welsh characteristic is of early date as the ancient "Tribal Hidage" with its reference to "ira Brittonum" shows.

He refused to recognize the jurisdiction of the National War Labour Board in the settlement of disputes between Capital and Labour. He was equally hostile to the "little steel" formula devised by that Board. This formula laid down the rule

"that wage earners who had received as much as 15 per cent increase in their wages between January, 1941, and May, 1942—the percentage whereby the cost of living had risen in that period—should not receive any further increase, but that those who had not were eligible for rises equalling that percentage above their January, 1941, wages."¹ The Board, perhaps as an afterthought, stretched the formula by providing that the 15 per cent limitation need not apply in cases of "inequities" or "maladjustments" which it did not actually define. Other Labour leaders disliked the formula on the ground that it was too rigid and that it did not take account of the great rise in the price of "farm products" which was naturally followed by a rise in retail food prices. But none of them attacked it with the same fire and fury as John Llewelyn Lewis. He demanded a rise of \$2 a day for 450,000 soft coal miners, and although a general strike in the industry was staved off during the quarter, the omens remained unfavourable. Meanwhile the powerful American Federation of Labour had petitioned the War Labour Board that it should abandon its "little steel" formula. The Board rejected the petition by eight votes to four, and its chairman declared that it would continue to administer the national wage stabilization policy of October, 1942, "to protect United States workers and all citizens from a 'phoney' (i.e. depreciated) dollar."

Finance The President sent his War Budget for the financial year ending June 30, 1944, to Congress on January 11. Its figures were astronomical.

War expenditure for the year 1942-43 was estimated (in terms of sterling) at £19,750,000,000, and at £23,000,000,000 for 1943-44. The Budget called for the raising of £4,000,000,000 by taxes and forced savings in addition to the £6,500,000,000 derived from existing taxation. In his message to Congress the President said that the Budget presented a maximum programme for waging war. "We wage total war because our very existence is threatened. Without that supreme effort we cannot hope to retain the freedom and self-respect which give life its value."

American agricultural production was larger than ever before, but the national needs and those of the Allies were so great that a shortage of certain foods was "inevitable." Production of less-needed commodities must give place to the production of essentials in agriculture as in industry. "There will be sufficient volume in our bill of fare but less variety." That may hurt our taste but not our health. To facilitate this programme he was recommending the expenditure of nearly £210,000,000 on aids to agriculture for the fiscal year 1944.

In spite of the war programme "civilians can be supplied with an average of about £500 worth of goods and services next year." This implies an average reduction of almost 25 per cent in civilian consumption below the record level of the calendar year 1941. Even then most of us will be better fed, better clothed, better housed than the other peoples of the world.

¹ *The Times* New York correspondent, *loc. cit.* February 1.

He expressed his confidence that Congress would put the Stabilization programme into operation. He said that it was most important that Congress should not be asked to lay heavy burdens on the lower and middle incomes "unless taxes on higher and very large incomes are made fully effective. At a time when wages and salaries are stabilized the receipt of very large net incomes . . . constitutes gross inequity undermining national unity." He followed up this reminder by renewing his warning against inflation which, he observed, had usually paid for past wars and by shifting "the greatest burden to the weakest shoulders and inviting post-war collapse." He sought to avoid both, but the programme must be harsh. By the end of the current fiscal year the public debt would total £33,750,000,000, and it would reach £52,500,000,000 by June 30, 1944. Congress would be asked to extend the present debt limit of £25,000,000,000. But the nation was "soundly solvent."

He closed with the reminder (which always infuriated a number of American business interests of an ultra-Conservative colour) that the "tremendous productive capacity of our country" had shown that "freedom from want for everybody everywhere" was "no longer a Utopian dream," and that it could be translated into action when fear of aggression had been removed by victory.

Congress remained in a restive mood. On February 18 the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives refused to impose a super-tax limiting net income to a maximum equivalent of £5,000 for a single person and £10,000 for a married couple, and this was only one of several rebuffs administered to the Executive. Meanwhile, the Treasury had discovered that less than six weeks before 39,000,000 income-tax payers had to pay their first instalment, the majority of them—most of whom were paying income-tax for the first time in their lives—had not saved enough to pay. The fault lay with the dilatoriness of Congress in passing the Tax Bill in 1942 and with the ignorance of the Treasury as to the true position. Mr. Beardsley Ruml, Chairman of the New York Federal Reserve Bank, suggested changing the income-tax system to the "pay-as-you-go" principle which the Treasury first opposed and finally accepted, but with conditions that made the application of the principle impracticable. At the end of March popular polls showed that the majority of the electorate favoured the Ruml plan while the Democratic majority in the House of Representatives was still battling against its adoption.

Such were some of the most notable features of the American scene in the first quarter of 1943.

NOTE.—The President's address to the 78th Congress will be found in Chapter I, Section 1.

2 : LATIN AMERICA

Outside Argentina, who maintained her neutrality, the Axis lost ground steadily in the Latin American countries. On January 20 Señor Joaquín Fernández, the Chilean Foreign Minister, summoned the heads of the diplomatic missions of all friendly states to inform them that his Government had severed their relations with Germany, Italy and Japan. Shortly afterwards the Chilean Ambassadors in Washington and Rio de Janeiro apprised the United States and Brazil of their Government's decision. The news was warmly welcomed by the State Department, where Mr. Cordell Hull described it as an important contribution to the security of the continent. It was much regretted in Buenos Aires, where the isolationist President and his Government had hoped against hope that Chile would stand aloof from the other Latin American States and give them her moral support. However, they put the best face they could on their disappointment and informed the Press that the relations of Argentina with Chile would continue to be marked by the utmost cordiality.

News from Santiago de Chile showed that President Ríos had informed Parliament of his intention to demand the rupture of relations with the Axis Governments before the question came before the Senate on January 19. The Foreign Minister had introduced the following resolution on behalf of the President :

"After hearing an exposition of international policy by the Foreign Minister, Señor Fernández, the Senate resolves to express its full conformity with the policy adopted by the President, who, in accordance with his constitutional powers, has announced his decision to break off relations between Chile and the Governments of the Axis countries."

The resolution was carried by 30 votes to 10, with two abstentions. The vote was followed by popular demonstrations in favour of the Government. It was not, however, expected that the break would lead to Chile's early participation in the war. About 400 suspect Axis subjects—there was a large German colony in Chile—were ordered to leave the capital and were

dispersed in country towns where they remained under close observation. Some 300 Chilean citizens, who were reported to include many naturalized Germans, sought to enter Argentina secretly, but were arrested by the police.

The announcement of the Chilean Government's action was heartily cheered in the House of Commons. In a message to our King, President Rios, after informing his Majesty of his decision, said :

"In communicating this to your Majesty, I have pleasure in reiterating the sentiments of cordial friendship toward this noble sister-nation which animate the Chilean people and Government, and to transmit to you my fervent wishes for the triumph of the ideals of democracy and justice by which the attitude of your Majesty's Government is inspired. In this solemn moment in the history of America, I beg your Majesty to accept the assurances of my highest and most distinguished consideration."

In his reply to President Rios, King George said that the news of the rupture of diplomatic and consular relations between Chile and the Axis Powers had given him great satisfaction. He added :

"I cordially reciprocate the friendly sentiments to which you have given expression on behalf of the Chilean people and Government, and send you my best wishes for the welfare and prosperity of the Republic of Chile in a world founded on the principles of democratic liberty and justice."

On March 26 Mr. Henry Wallace, Vice-President of the United States, arrived in the Chilean capital, where he was enthusiastically received. In a speech before the Chilean Congress on March 27 Mr. Wallace, who addressed his audience in Spanish, predicted the disappearance of differences between the various groups in the Americas and a union of Latin States such as Bernardo O'Higgins and Simon Bolivar had dreamed of.

The publication of the United States memorandum on Nazi espionage in Argentina at the Inter-American Committee of Political Defence in Montevideo displeased the Argentine Government. The contents of the memorandum had been communicated confidentially to the Argentine Government in November. Certain persons had been charged with espionage by the Argentine authorities and the Government held, not altogether unnaturally, that this publication was analogous to

contempt of court. On January 22 the Foreign Ministry issued an official statement which described the publication as "prejudicial and redundant."

The statement added that the object of the Montevideo Committee was to study and co-ordinate measures before making sensational revelations. Its proper function was to draft recommendations and make suggestions. The Committee had been informed of the intervention of the Federal Public Prosecutor in the espionage trial and the participation of the Argentine Supreme Court. Part of the judicial proceedings had been brought to a rapid close and the German Naval Attaché, Captain Niebuhr, had been required to leave Argentina. The proceedings against the other defendants would continue. But the memorandum published at Montevideo contained nothing new. It was a summary of information already communicated to the Argentine Government by the United States and revealed "discreetly" by the Argentine Press. The complete publication of the other charges at this juncture might complicate the Public Prosecutor's task.

There was no change in the attitude of the Argentine Government. In a statement of policy made on February 20 the President said that the country would remain neutral, and he recommended Dr. Robustiano Costa, whose policy he described as "half-way between Right and Left," as his successor at the end of his own administration in February, 1944. Dr. Costa, he made it clear, would support a policy of neutrality. In one respect Argentina deviated slightly from her policy of strict neutrality by agreeing to manufacture arms, munitions and other war material for Great Britain. Britain was to provide the raw materials, which, it was presumed, would be carried, as the manufactured articles would be, in British vessels. The decree announcing the agreement explained that the Argentine war industries were almost completely inactive in peace-time and were faced with the choice of producing for foreign markets or of disbanding their staffs of skilled workers. The arrangement was not expected to contribute much to the British war effort.

Meanwhile, the Brazilian Government pressed their preparations and gave increasing support to the United Nations against the U-boats which infested the South Atlantic. Such incidents of the campaign there as were made public will be found in Chapter IV (Section 1) of this chronicle, and President Roosevelt's visit to President

Vargas at Natal is recorded in the opening chapter thereof. On February 15 it was officially announced that Senhor Joachim Salgado, Brazilian Air Minister, had conferred at Recife with Field-Marshal Sir John Dill and Lieutenant-Generals H. H. Arnold and Brehon Somervell of the U.S. Army. Sir John Dill and General Arnold had arrived in Brazil from Chungking (q.v. Chapter V, Section 2). It was understood that now that Brazil was no longer threatened from Dakar, Brazilian co-operation would be concentrated on the campaign against the submarines, on offensive rather than defensive action. Meanwhile, Brazilian production, especially of "strategic" minerals and metals, such as manganese, bauxite, nickel and industrial diamonds, was expanding rapidly, and it was hoped that the country would produce 50,000 tons of rubber in 1943. Internally the country was tranquil, although the timely discovery of a plot in which military officers of German descent were involved suggested that there was still some pro-Nazi activity under the surface. On February 10 the Brazilian Ambassador, Senhor Moniz de Aragao, notified Mr. Eden of his country's adherence to the Atlantic Charter and the United Nations' declaration of January 1, 1942. The Mexican Government had done much to put their military house in order and performed a useful service in patrolling and garrisoning thinly inhabited areas on the Pacific Coast where Japanese agents and sabotage parties might have been landed to make their way into the United States. The national production of raw materials for war purposes increased steadily, and Mexican aircraft and small surface ships supplied by the U.S.A. helped to patrol the Caribbean Sea.

Of the other Latin American states there is little to relate. Dr. Guani, the Foreign Minister of Uruguay, visited Washington late in January to discuss certain economic questions, and also to reopen diplomatic relations with Russia which had been severed in 1936 on account of the Russian use of Uruguay as a base for Communist propaganda in Latin America. The new President of Uruguay, Dr. Amezaga, assumed office early in March and condemned the dictatorships in his inaugural address to Parliament. In February arrangements were concluded for the purchase by the British Government of the floating dock at Montevideo, payment to be made in the form of 100,000 tons of coal delivered in monthly instalments. Peru adhered formally to the Atlantic Charter on February 9.

CHAPTER VII

IN THE ENEMY'S CAMP

I : GERMANY

"After the winter we shall resume our march." With these words, in a solemn new year proclamation, Hitler ushered in the first quarter of 1943—and they fell upon the ears of the German people (so a Swedish journalist wrote) as though Job's comforter were uttering counsels of encouragement to Sisyphus. The pause implied was all too obviously a slipping, or a staggering, back—marked by the startling news from Africa, the fearful attrition and retreat on the eastern front, the ceaseless bombing from the west, the growing restiveness of the enslaved countries, and the relentless piling up of Allied strength in men and arms. And the march, if it were to be resumed, was clearly not one with the goal in sight.

Man-power was the overriding problem. Men, and more men, were needed to make good the unexpected wastage in Russia, to garrison the occupied countries, to man the "European fortress" with its long and vulnerable coast-line. Men, and women too, were needed in the arsenals, to keep going the losing race against American and British arms production. It was total war indeed.

In effect, the fourteenth quarter saw a *levée en masse* of the German people. In spite of Teutonic thoroughness, and the deliberate policy of the Nazis planned years since, there had been still a labour margin. This margin was now, of necessity, absorbed. People spoke of a new "Rathenau Plan," making an ominous analogy with 1918.

At the beginning of the Quarter it was estimated that there were 6,000,000 foreign workers in Germany—about one-fourth of the total number of workers. The armed forces numbered 10,000,000, of whom at least 4,000,000 were engaged in the Russian campaign. But the Reich

had already suffered fully 5,000,000 casualties, and it was abundantly clear that these vast numbers were none too many, either at home or at the front, for the tasks that confronted it. So the impressing of labour from the occupied countries continued. Before the quarter was ended the 6,000,000 foreign workers are thought to have risen to 8,000,000. But it was *Ersatz* labour, that had to be driven to produce results, and demanded elaborate measures of social segregation. Sauckel, the man-power chief, resolved to plumb the bottom of purely German resources. Total civilian mobilization was decreed, and it was to be completed by March 15.

The changes that followed certainly suggested that previous boasts about "total war" had to some extent been window-dressing. A surprisingly large number of undisturbed backwaters of German economic life had been left to be sucked at last into the main stream. Thousands of small shops, forced now to close, flung on to the market an alarming assortment of hoarded stock which they had been accumulating against the time when black market prices should prevail ; while the big department stores, though condemned from the outset by the Party Programme, only now began to disappear. Luxuries vanished which one had supposed had gone long ago, such as "perms" for women and bespoke tailoring for men. The newspapers even commented on the passing of the *hors-d'œuvre* wagon which had hitherto glided discreetly across the carpets of fashionable restaurants.

Women began to be called up in greater numbers. A year before, the Nazi population policy had demanded that they stayed at home and became mothers ; but now it was no longer possible to look so far ahead. Britain was actually pointed to as a country which had known how to use its woman-power. Officially, women were made liable to national service between the ages of 17 and 45, and men between 16 and 65.

Experts believed that some success was achieved by "total civilian mobilization." Aircraft production began to pull up a little, and the evil system called "output wage"—a species of piece-rates designed to reduce the

lazy or inefficient worker almost to starvation point—had its first galvanizing effect. Dr. Ley, however, betrayed no overweening confidence in the future. Such a mobilization meant hardship for everyone, and in every department of life. It was useless for home propaganda to disguise this. On New Year's Day the Berlin Press frankly admitted that the coming twelve months would be "harder than the last," and a fortnight later Goebbels, in his weekly article in *Das Reich*, was frankly admitting :

"In the east we are fighting a system which has reached the summit of cruelty in the course of total war. We can resist its onslaught and survive it only if we drag out the last ounce of our own resources. Neither private wishes nor private interests must be considered." A few days later he added : "The war has reached its grimmest stage. Nobody must stand aside ; no more privileges must exist. There are no special rights any longer—neither right of profession, nor of standard of living, nor of age, nor of sex. Exemptions have come to an end."

The *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* wrote on January 21 of "the merciless hardness of the struggle"; and, shortly after the news of the Casablanca meeting came through, the extraordinary slogan was invented "Through fighting and misery to victory"—a disappointing variant of "Strength through joy."

Hitler himself disappeared from view during these unpromising days. He was supposed to be "with his soldiers on the eastern front," and pictures were published showing him poring over maps—though against a background more suggestive of Berchtesgaden than of the Ukraine.

The ceremonial date of January 30, the tenth anniversary of the Nazi seizure of power, arrived, and it was thought that now at last the Führer must make a public appearance, as at all but one of the previous anniversaries he had. But no. Not even his voice was heard over the wireless. He was too busy, so it was said, to broadcast, being still "with his troops in Russia." However, he signed a short proclamation, addressed to the armed forces of the Reich. It struck the same unconfident note as Goebbels had been sounding :

We must fight on doggedly until the whole continent is saved. We must not wait on Providence to grant us victory. Every individual and nation must be weighed in the balance, and those found wanting must fall.

Göring was the substitute speaker, and the comedy of his delayed oration in the Hall of Honour of the Air Ministry is described elsewhere.¹ It was Göring who had promised that no bombs should fall on the Reich, and now it was Göring who, in the aural presence of the whole of Germany, ran for shelter in his own Air Ministry in Berlin. There could not have been a more pointed demonstration of the fundamental failure of his *Luftwaffe*. His speech, when it came, promised unheard-of revenge for these outrages—some time in the future. King Lear uttered just such pathetic threats. Otherwise, the Field-Marshal had little of comfort to offer his hearers. He even confessed that the German general staff had been deceived by the Russian conduct of the Finnish war.

This admission proved to be a somewhat unhelpful prelude to the terrible news, two days later, of the first major German military defeat, the surrender at Stalingrad. With monstrous callousness Hitler had postponed this foregone event until after January 30, so as not to add to the gloom of the anniversary proceedings. But once the worst had happened and the truth was out, the propaganda machine, doubtless with a right understanding of German psychology, entered on a mood of strained and extravagant mourning. "I Had a Comrade" was again the song of the hour, and the whole bitter episode was thought fit to be presented as a kind of *danse macabre*, a bloody ballet of fore-ordained death, formalized, almost liturgically, under the name "The Passion of Stalingrad."

"What we used to inflict on others," said the military commentator Dittmar, in a burst of despairing frankness, "has happened to us. It is still difficult to realize. We feel it like a sharp physical pain."

The Nazis hoped to arouse in the German people new extremes of hatred. The Labour leader, Ley, wrote in the *Angriff*: "Stalingrad was the great turning-point for the people. You good-natured Germans, learn to hate, and hate again!"

Neutral observers, however, saw in this no real tonic for the German apathy. On March 21—"Heroes' Day," postponed by a week—Hitler did reappear in Berlin to speak in the Zeughaus, and shook dazed and

¹ Chapter IV, Section 2.

wounded soldiers by the hand. There was no cheering, and the Führer's own speech was flat and tired.

The other stimulus of Jew-baiting was again tried. Words dropped here and there made it plain that nothing less than the complete extermination of the Jewish people was the Nazi ambition. "We will answer terror with terror," was a slogan at the Nazi birthday celebrations at Munich on February 24. The threat seemed superfluous, but it was made.

A terrible travesty of trial by jury was introduced at this time. Thierack, the Minister "of Justice," set up a system of "everyday justice" administered by lay magistrates, unhampered by legal form or precedent. Strange that this apparently desirable principle, of unprofessional, common-sense justice, so often dreamt of by theoretical reformers, should in the end be applied by Nazis. Yet it was clear that they applied it for ignoble ends, to make of the lower courts an instrument of petty tyranny, as the People's Courts were instruments of grand tyranny. Moreover, it was a further blow to just those professional classes who had helped Hitler to power, and had hoped to be rewarded.

2 : ITALY

The Nazi Press might boast (though hardly in the tones of world conquerors) that thousands of kilometres still separated the sacred soil of the Reich from Soviet marauders; but equivalent reassurances were not open to Italian Fascist commentators. The vulnerability of Italy was all too apparent as the North African campaign drew to its close.

The Duce's policy had, in fact, already been proved an unmistakable failure. Hitler might still justify himself in the eyes of the German people, but Mussolini was irrevocably disgraced. The despair of the hour in Italy was reflected within the ranks of the Fascist Party itself. Mussolini's one expedient was to concentrate more power than ever into his own hands, while preparing a relay of potential Darlans under cover of whom he might, at the last moment, be able to make good his escape.

This, at any rate, was the common explanation of the Cabinet changes of February 5, which ousted Ciano from the Foreign Ministry, Grandi from the Ministry of Justice, Thaon di Reval from the Treasury and Bottai from control of education. The Duce became again his own Foreign Minister, and in the other posts put Fascists whose reactions to coming change might be regarded as automatic.

Like all successful dictators, Mussolini had known how to divert unpopularity from himself to his henchmen. By removing some of the more prominent of them he was able to appear to be entering the final struggle with less of the incubus of his past deeds. Yet the very men he was dismissing might later themselves be called back again, guiltless, in the public eye, of the latest developments, and therefore ready to signify the turning over by the Duce of yet another new leaf. So, for example, Count Ciano, transferred to the post of Ambassador to the Holy See, was not beyond hailing distance, and not entirely excluded from holding open for his father-in-law a back-door of retreat.

In the lower ranks of the Party these considerations were hardly relevant; it was all a matter of keeping the war effort alive and meeting the problems raised by the growing Allied air offensive. Italy was a nation of potential Darlans, but the opportunity for the practice of Darlanism had not yet generally occurred. Resisting the Allies, under German direction, was still the business of the hour, and the "total mobilization" of the German dispensation was faithfully reflected south of the Alps. Males between the ages of 14 and 70 and females between 14 and 60 were all made liable to national service. The last resources of the nation were turned over to war purposes, amid the confusion caused by the destruction of half the merchant navy and the loss of all the empire.

On February 1 Mussolini made one of his now rare public speeches. Addressing Fascist youth, he said that the nation which won a war was that which could hold out a quarter of an hour longer than its enemy. He knew

that he was addressing people who were already morally beaten, and were casting about in their own minds for some way of surrendering at the earliest possible moment ; and they knew that he knew it. But for the present there was no alternative but to fight on—and the Duce's words were a kind of grim caricature of the facts as they stood. The shattered Italian divisions who in March were ordered home from Russia were, perhaps, the first swallows of a portentous spring.

CHAPTER VIII

VICTIMS, ACCOMPLICES AND NEUTRALS

I : INTERNATIONAL ACTION

Before describing the torments of the victims and the disillusionments of the satellites of the Axis a few lines must be devoted to certain international steps which were taken or were being prepared by the United Nations against the day of the downfall of their enemies. On January 5 the Foreign Office issued a statement in which the British Government associated themselves with the Governments of 16 other nations whose territories had been invaded by one or other of the Axis Powers and the French National Committee in making

"a formal declaration of their determination to combat and defeat the plundering by the enemy Powers of the territories which have been overrun or brought under enemy control." This plundering, the statement continued, took many forms, "from open looting to the most cunningly camouflaged financial penetration." It has extended to every kind of property—"from works of art to stocks of commodities, from bullion and banknotes to stocks and shares in business and financial undertakings." The statement pointed out that neutral citizens were sometimes being used "as fences and cloaks" by the thieves. The Governments associated in the statement therefore issued a declaration warning all concerned and particularly persons in neutral countries that they reserved their right to declare invalid any transfers of or dealings with property, rights and interests which were or had been situated in territories invaded or controlled by the hostile Governments or which belonged or had belonged to persons resident in those territories.

An explanatory memorandum on the declaration said that it was being communicated to other members of the United Nations. While it was impossible to define exactly the action which would be taken, the declaration marked the solidarity of the Governments which had made it.¹ They were pledged to assist one another when

¹ These were the Governments of the United Kingdom, India, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the United States of America, the Soviet Union, China, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Norway, Holland, Belgium, Greece, Yugoslavia and Luxemburg.

necessary, and to follow similar lines of policy. A committee of experts was to be formed

to "consider the scope and sufficiency of the existing legislation of the Allied countries for invalidating transfers or dealings of the nature indicated in the declaration." The committee had been asked to collect and receive information on the methods of looting or spoliation adopted by the enemy Governments and their adherents.

On January 20 the British Government in an *aide-memoire* to the United States Government urged that the problem presented by the refugees from the countries overrun by the Germans should be handled more comprehensively, and suggested that

"the most efficient method of handling the matter would be an immediate informal Conference which would determine what each Government is doing already and would be able to ascertain what further action could be taken to receive refugees. . . ." In the event of international co-operation proving impracticable the British Government and colonies would be glad to examine the situation to find out whether there was still a possibility, "despite all other demands for food space in ships, of taking even further refugees into British territory." The disadvantage of bringing further refugees to Britain was explained. The British Government had undertaken to receive in Palestine, if arrangements could be made, up to 29,000 Jewish children with a proportion of adults by March 3.

In their reply the United States Government said that no one Government could solve the problem, that their own action was governed by the immigration laws enacted by Congress, and that further efforts to solve the problem could best be undertaken by the executive committee of the Inter-Governmental Committee on Refugees. They suggested that plans should be considered for the maintenance of refugees in the neutral countries of Europe. This might involve the giving of assurances from the United Nations if necessary as to the support of these people until their repatriation and of assurances from their Governments in exile of the prompt return of these refugees to their native countries at the close of hostilities.

On March 5 Mr. Sumner Welles announced that a United Nations Relief Council would be formed and that it would be headed by Mr. Herbert Lehman, the former Governor of New York. On March 23 the Lord Privy Seal stated in the House of Lords that the British Government had been far from inactive in this matter. The question had been taken up between Mr. Cordell Hull and Mr. Eden at Washington, conversations between British and American representatives would take place shortly and an agenda had been drawn up.

2: THE VICTIMS

The martyrdom of Poland continued during the quarter, although towards its end there were a few, although only a few, signs that a less barbarous policy might be tried. This would only be a temporary measure dictated by the difficulties of the Germans on the Russian front, and the Poles were unlikely to be taken in by it. For the Jews no mercy was or was likely to be shown.

In mid-January it was known that mass arrests were beginning in Warsaw, and on January 27 General Sikorski informed the Press in London that from January 14 to January 18, 35,000 persons had been arrested in Warsaw and sent to concentration camps. On February 12 the Germans announced that seventy hostages had been shot in reprisal for armed attacks on Germans. A curfew was imposed and Warsaw was fined 10,000,000 zlotys (about £400,000). Early in March Swedish newspapers reported the utter destruction of seven villages near Lublin and the massacre of their male inhabitants. Further destructions of villages around Lublin were reported later in the month. On March 27 some fifty Germans were killed in a regular battle between troops and S.S. men on the German side and Poles of the Krasnobrod region who had formed bands to resist deportation. It had previously transpired that on March 16 a joint committee of various patriotic secret societies placarded the walls of Warsaw and other cities with a proclamation giving directions to the public to assist deserters from non-German units on the Russian front.

NOTE. For the Russian-Polish disputes see Chapter I, Section 2.

During January the Germans announced a number of executions of persons accused of espionage, illegal agitation and the formation of secret military organizations. By mid-February the number of victims had reached 132 since New Year's day. There were further executions in March. On February 20 the Czechoslovak Government in London named those "who are being made responsible for German crimes."

These were "the Führer and the members of his Government, all the representatives of the German Government and the Nazi Party in Czechoslovakia, all German administrators and police officials, including the Gestapo and the S.S. and S.A. men, all Germans who had assisted the aforesaid culprits and all local traitors." It was learnt that since November, 1942, more than 1,000 Czechs had been arrested in reprisal for broadcasts from London.

These broadcasts evidently flicked the Germans on the raw for on February 26 Frank, the infamous Nazi chief administrator of the Protectorate, broadcast an attack on Dr. Beneš. He said that the Czechs abroad had but one interest, viz. : to keep their country in a turmoil and cause trouble in the armament factories.

If Germany were defeated, he said, Czech towns and villages would be laid waste. "We should defend this bastion of the Reich with all our might as a German bastion, we should defend it fanatically and to the last. Stalin could only enter Germany over the body of every single German and every single Czech." Not to fail in synthetic enthusiasm the puppet-President, Dr. Hacha, issued a proclamation which was, perhaps, the most abject that he had yet published. It began : "Faithful to the heritage of our forefathers, we have returned after a short, mock independence to the protection of the Reich at the moment when the destiny of Europe, betrayed by a false democracy and plundered by the Jews, began to mature." He asserted that Great Britain, unable to continue her "dominion" over Europe, was now handing it over to "Bolshevik barbarity," against which the Reich was standing like "a strong dam." The Czech people knew their duty to the Reich and to themselves. They could not, therefore, incur the shame with which posterity would judge nations or individuals who proved hesitant or cowards in 1943. "As we have parted for ever from Britain and her allies so we have for ever linked our fate with Greater Germany." The destiny of the Reich, he added, had become the Czech destiny. He therefore called upon the people to use every ounce of their energy for total war and to work to save their fatherland from famine and destruction.

German decrees announcing the total mobilization of the population for essential work were the natural sequel of this pitiable effusion. They led to numerous demonstrations, not a little sabotage and many more arrests.

Yugoslavia The internal situation in Yugoslavia was as confused as ever. In spite of semi-official statements to the contrary a good deal of information reached this country which gave the impression that there was not a little truth in the story given out by Moscow that General Mihailovitch and his army had arrived at least at a "stand-still agreement" with the Italians. It was, however, known that he had threatened General Bader,



HEINRICH HIMMLER

the German commander in Serbia, with reprisals against German prisoners if he continued to massacre Yugoslavs. His threat does not seem to have prevented the Germans from executing large numbers of hostages and suspects in many parts of Serbia. The general repulsed Axis thrusts in the Morava Valley, but it was hard to learn how far he was co-operating, if at all, with the "partisan" bands operating in Dalmatia, parts of Bosnia and Croatia, and apparently in the west of Serbia. It was known, however, in late March that he was in touch with the Croat Peasant Party.

In Croatia and German-controlled Slovenia there was much fighting with "Communists," in reality peasant bands sometimes lead by Communists. Great numbers of unfortunate Slovene peasants were deported to Germany from the districts of Kisko and Ptuj. The Germans announced the execution of 1,973 hostages on various occasions, and the Italians behaved so violently to the Croat and Slovene populations in the areas which they held as to provoke protests to the Vatican from Italian Bishops. In spite of expeditions of Italian, German and Croat "Ustashi" troops against the partisans, in which many persons were killed and scores of villages burned, the rebellion was far from crushed. Late in March it was learned that Slovene and Croat bands had wrecked trains on the Italian side of the Yugoslav border.

On March 27 King Peter broadcast an address to his people on the second anniversary of the Belgrade revolution in which he reviewed the situation.

For two years, he said, the people had endured one of the worst periods of suffering not so much on account of the partition of Yugoslavia but because of the blows which had been struck at the national organism, because of the destruction of towns, villages and homes, and, still more, because of the multitudes massacred or killed in fratricidal civil strife or put to death as hostages. "We can confidently rely on one thing," he said, "that decisive battles will be fought in Europe." He called on his people to follow and obey General Mihailovitch, but urged them not to begin any large insurrection until the time was ripe.

This last advice was by no means pleasing to Russian propagandists who were constantly calling upon the ill-armed population of Yugoslavia, and of other occupied

countries, to do more against the Germans. They and their admiring friends in this country did not seem to remember that while partisans in the populous Russian country-side who were regularly stiffened by reinforcements and munitions from the Red Army could accomplish much and aid the Russian military effort, the bands of sketchily armed peasants and even Mihailovitch's Army had no such sources of supply and no army at hand to help them.

Greece There was no important change in Greece during the period under review until late March, when some Italian troops were moved, apparently to Italy. It was believed that their place might be taken by Bulgarians, but no news of such a change reached Turkey before April. The information which reached Turkey and Cyprus from Greece was fairly full and more up to date than some of the news that came from Yugoslavia and Hungary.¹ It was clear that the national movement was growing in strength in spite of labour levies, hundreds of executions and the dire famine from which Greece had suffered. Bands of armed patriots, sometimes including British or Antipodean soldiers cut off in 1941, infested the mountains of the mainland and Crete and harassed Germans and Italians. Among their exploits were the destruction of a chemical factory near Salonika for which the Germans shot forty-seven villagers and fifty-six hostages, an explosion in the arsenal at Salamis, attacks on Italian detachments in Thessaly and Epirus, and the killing of sentries and policemen. German attempts to impose civil mobilization resulted in riots and the authorities were therefore compelled to limit their pressure to orders that all suitable men should work on fortifications or do other military tasks under pain of losing their bread cards. Early in February the Axis garrisons doubled their guards on bridges, harbour works, aerodromes, factories and naval yards, but even so they failed to prevent extensive sabotage.

¹ Reports of Greek affairs broadcast from Moscow proved when controllable to be rehashes of news which had already been published in Turkey.

The Times learnt (*loc. cit.*, March 26) that the Bulgarians had expelled about 100,000 Greeks from the parts of Macedonia which they occupied. By a Bulgarian decree published in June, 1942, all persons residing in this "Greater Bulgaria" acquired *ipso facto* Bulgarian nationality unless they opted for Yugoslav or Greek nationality, in which case they must leave Bulgarian territory. All Greek churches and schools were closed and Bulgarian became the sole official language. Late in 1942 another decree commanded that "all private estates indispensable for the building of residences for (Bulgarian) immigrants are to be expropriated on the demand of the Committee for Buildings established there by order of the General Commanding the Aegean Area."

On March 12 M. Canellopoulos, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, who held office in Cairo, resigned his post. Troubles, concerning the origin of which divers reports were current, appear to have arisen in the Army, although it should be said that the troops preserved the discipline and spirit which they had shown in the Battle of Egypt. King George of Greece reached Cairo on March 15, accompanied by M. Tsouderos, the Prime Minister, and set to work to discover the causes of the trouble and to bring about a general understanding. He succeeded. On March 25 *The Times* published the following message from its correspondent in Cairo :

"Since the arrival here of the King of the Hellenes and the Greek Prime Minister . . . important conversations have been going on among all Greek politicians and parties and the armed forces, including partisans still fighting in Greece. The result of these conversations is probably to be found in the official announcement, just issued, of a reshuffle of the Greek Cabinet. M. Tsouderos still heads the Government, but M. Canellopoulos, General Nicholaides, Admiral Cawadias and M. Sekeris have resigned. Their places have been taken by M. George Roussos, who becomes Minister of Marine and deputy Prime Minister ; M. Karapanayiotis, Minister of War and Acting Minister for Air ; and M. Sophoulis, Minister of Public Welfare. The other portfolios remain unchanged. The resignation of Admiral Sakellariou, Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet, has also been accepted.

It is difficult in present circumstances to comment on these charges or the conditions which made them necessary. . . . The King . . . received a message from Colonel Zervas who leads the Greek guerilla forces. In reply . . . the King, after thanking all the soldiers of Greece for their devotion and resolution, said that after his return to Greece he would conform to the will of his people."

Greek Independence Day was celebrated in London, where Mr. Oliver Lyttelton reaffirmed the British pledge to free Greece from Axis domination in an eloquent

speech. In Egypt, King George, in an order of the day to the armed forces, said that the anniversary came at a time when victory was at last in sight. He continued :

"The turn of events in the war has made my presence as commander-in-chief of the armed forces and the presence of the Government necessary for the conduct of the fight for the liberation of our country." He appealed for national unity and promised that political problems would be studied and any defects in the organization of the national forces would be remedied. A telegram from Mr. Churchill praised the Greek people for their magnificent fortitude and assured M. Tsouderos that Greece would have warning of the hour "when it is time to act as one man," and "when she will drive the barbarous usurpers from her soil."

Much satisfaction was caused in Greek official and military circles by Mr. Law's statement in the House of Commons on March 24 condemning the brutality with which the Bulgars treated occupied Greece and concluding with the assurance that the British Government regarded the Bulgarian measures of denationalization as null and void and would hold the Bulgarian Government responsible for these measures of expropriation and expulsion which "will have to be undone at the end of the war."

Baltic States

News from German and Russian sources as to the state of affairs in the Baltic States was suspect. The Germans sought to prove that the Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians saw in them their only salvation from Russia. Russian propagandists averred that these luckless people had desired their union with Russia and that the 99 per cent votes cast in its favour during the controlled elections of 1940 genuinely reflected national opinion. Occasional news from Swedish sources was more reliable. This showed that late in February the Germans had proclaimed a general mobilization of the men in all three countries to form special legions, and had threatened recalcitrants with deprivation of their right to hold private property which had been restored. In Latvia two villages had been razed and their people banished for helping partisans. In Lithuania the slaughter of a group of disobedient farmers had caused unrest. On March 30 Swedish reports stated that the German authorities had decided to summon a national assembly in each of these once happy independent states.

Denmark

In Denmark the increasing resistance of the Danish people to the German occupying authorities caused the enemy much disquiet. The "Model Protectorate" was

not living up to its character ! Nevertheless the German authorities did not oppose the holding of a general election on March 22, probably because, little as they troubled over constitutional forms, the Danes are constitutionally minded, and without an election Parliament could not have functioned constitutionally. The results of the election were remarkable. There was no electioneering, no public meetings were held, and only the Press and the wireless could remind the voters—discreetly—of their responsibilities. Yet the five chief democratic parties, and the anti-German opposition group, known as the Dansk Samling, fought the election on the clear issue of the choice between free democratic institutions or the New Order, and they won a remarkable victory. The following figures show how complete it was :

Of 148 seats, 140 fell to the National Coalition. The Social Democrats won 66 (+2), the Conservatives 31 (+5), the Agrarians 28 (-2), the Liberals 13 (-1), and the Union of Justice 2 (-2). The Dansk Samling, hitherto unrepresented, won 3 seats. The two pro-Nazi parties, Clausens' Danish National Socialists and the Peasant Party, held five seats, but the last-named lost one of its three seats and the two together polled only 67,968 votes against 81,861 in 1939. The Social Democrats, though they had held office continuously since 1929, added about 165,000 votes to their previous total, and the Conservatives scored 120,000 more votes than in the election of 1939. About 90 per cent of the electors voted.

The election was, in fact, an excellent example of the meaning of the title chosen by the Danish journalist, Terkel Terkelsen, for a pamphlet which had a wide circulation in his country, *Fight Follows Surrender*. Nor did the Danes confine themselves to casting their votes in favour of anti-Nazi deputies. They indulged more and more frequently in sabotage. The Germans declared that they harboured Allied parachutists dropped from bombers by night. Fires in buildings occupied by, or factories working for the Germans led to numerous arrests.¹

The violence of Quisling's Nasional Samling and of ^{Norway} the Germans did not abate during the quarter. The

¹ For the preceding summary of the results of the Danish election the writer is indebted to Mr. George Soloveytchik's article "A Memorable Anniversary" in *Free Europe*, April 9.

clergy, the professors and teachers, the professional classes with the former trade union leaders, formed nuclei of resistance everywhere, and every sort of device ranging from sabotage to the multiplication of official correspondence was employed to trouble the tyrants. Arrests did not check underground movement more than temporarily, even when in February over 500 persons were seized and imprisoned or sent to concentration camps. German demands for more and ever more labour furnished the Quisling administration with new means of oppression. On February 22 Quisling proclaimed a law for the mobilization of all males aged 18 to 55 and of women between 21 and 40 years of age to assist the German war effort "to save Norway from Bolshevism." The labour conscripts, he said, were to work in Norway, but could not choose their work. Terboven supported his jackal by stating that recalcitrants would be forced to work, and that shirking would be regarded as evidence of Communism. The "full authority" of the German Reich was behind the new law. Taking advantage of the law, the Quisling Government was reported to have closed part of Oslo University and sent a number of students to timber-cutting camps. In March it was learnt that Skancke, the Church Minister, had sent the names of 275 disobedient clergymen and theological graduates to the Directorate of Labour Exchanges and had demanded that they should be immediately called up for compulsory labour. Early in the month the executive of the Federation of Industry had been dismissed and a decree issued empowering the Department of Trade to enforce a general "concentration" of industry.

There were reports of executions and of the dropping of Norwegian soldiers and secret agents by parachute to prepare for an insurrection and to promote sabotage. The German-controlled Oslo station announced that a landing from British light craft on the west coast had been repelled. This encounter was said to have happened at night on March 22. On March 27 reports from Oslo announced that a state of partial emergency had been proclaimed in Rjukan, Southern Norway, after the

destruction of a hydro-electric works by three men wearing British uniforms.

Outside Norway the exiles and their kinsfolk in Canada, the United States and Great Britain held together and were cheered by a statement made by King Haakon in London on February 17. After stating that the campaign in Norway had cost the Germans over 50,000 men killed, drowned and wounded, six warships and many transports, he told his people that a Norwegian air force had been formed in Canada, that 67 of Norway's 107 whale-catchers had been taken over by the British Navy for coastal patrolling and similar purposes, and that more than 1,000 Norwegian merchantmen were in Allied service all over the world.

The German task in Holland grew no lighter. The proclamation on January 23 of Hr. Mussert, head of the Dutch Nazis, as "Führer of the Dutch people," bore fruit in a crop of political murders in which General Seyffardt, the only Dutch general to co-operate with the Nazis, Reydon, Mussert's propaganda Minister and other collaborators with Germany perished.

Executions of hostages in reprisal for these attacks and for others on German soldiers had no effect save to embitter the Dutch still further. On February 24 a decree was issued ordaining "the total concentration of all available forces" and empowering Seyss-Inquart, the Reich Commissar, to inflict death or other severe penalties on persons guilty of violence, sabotage, illegal possession of arms, illegal political activities and listening to foreign broadcasts. Later it was learnt that Hitler's decree for the total mobilization of man-power in Germany had been made applicable in Holland. These preliminaries were followed by the vigorous enforcement of German labour demands and by an attempt to break the spirit or enslave the minds of the students. On March 20 a decree fixed a maximum number of students for all branches of university education and enjoined that only those who signed a solemn declaration of loyalty to the New Order and undertook to obey the laws, decrees and

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Nether-
lands

regulations enforced by the German Occupation authorities, should be admitted to study. On March 30 news reached London that, no doubt in consequence of these orders, thousands of students had been arrested and that 2,000 had been sent to Vught concentration camp.

With these attacks on independent thought came regular man-hunts. Whole areas were cordoned off and all young men up to twenty-five years of age were rounded up. If their papers showed that they were not exempted from compulsory labour they were detained for dispatch to Germany. Regulations for the closing of all industrial enterprises that were not essential to the German war effort were also issued. On March 29 it became known that the heads of the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches had sent a joint letter of protest to Seyss-Inquart.

The letter protested against the persecution of the Jews. It pointed out that an outlook on life in entire contradiction to the Christian standpoint was being forced on the people and notably the young. It protested against the interference with Christian education, the deportation of Dutch workers for forced labour in Germany, the cruel and often fatal conditions of life in the German concentration camps and the slaughter of hostages. In addition to all this there was the slave hunt of young people who were being carried off by thousands to Germany. The letter followed a pastoral letter from the Catholic Bishops and a declaration by the Reformed Church which were read in churches throughout Holland.

Belgium The Germans began the year by imposing conscription on the inhabitants of Eupen, Malmedy and St. Vith, which they had re-annexed to the Reich ; after which they imposed long sentences of imprisonment on the Belgian Burgomaster of Trois Ponts and the Council Secretary who had aided inhabitants of the annexed region to desert. During the three months of the quarter there were many executions of Belgians for "terrorism and sabotage," and great numbers of workmen were deported to the Reich. On March 4 the German official wireless broadcast the news that a round-up of labour, especially of young persons between eighteen and twenty, had been organized to free more German workers for military purposes. These measures gave rise to riots, the destruction of the records in labour exchanges and further attacks on German soldiers and policemen. Executions for the

distribution of secret newspapers were frequent. Twelve were reported between February 24 and March 16. Commander Lambert, one of the most active contributors to *La Libre Belgique*, was among the victims.

The King and the Church protested against the new slavery. On March 21 a collective letter from Cardinal van Roey and the Belgian Bishops protesting against the conscription of Belgian workers for Germany was read in all Roman Catholic churches. On March 25 the Belgian News Agency stated that King Leopold, in a letter to the President of the Belgian Red Cross, published in *La Libre Belgique*, had informed him that he (the King) had protested to Hitler against the deportations. Hitler had replied that the necessities of war prevented him from terminating these deportations.

Although Laval, now all-powerful in Metropolitan France, collaborated to the utmost of his ability with the Germans, the attitude of the French people gave daily increasing evidence of the national support of the Allied cause and of the depth of French hostility to the New Order and all its works. The attempts of Laval to form, not an army—for that the Germans would never allow—but a sort of Prætorian Guard to defend his regime; the increasing demands of the Reich for French labour in order to release Germans for the Russian front; the extension of attacks on German soldiers and police to southern France; the numerous "desertions" of the Vichy Government by French diplomatists serving abroad and the Government's reaction to these and other signs of their loss of any remnants of prestige; these are the principal items of the following melancholy chronicle.

Early in January it became known abroad that Laval was forming a force to be called the National Militia. This body was to take the place of the small and disarmed army left to France by the armistice of 1940 and demobilized by Hitler's orders after the scuttling of the Fleet at Toulon. French wireless stations, naturally under Axis control, said on January 10 that for the present this force would be drawn from members of the *Service d'Ordre*

Légionnaire which had been separated from the *Légion des Combattants* (patronized by Marshal Pétain), and placed under Laval's exclusive control.

Lyons Radio broadcast a message from Pétain himself to the new formation. He said that it had demonstrated its energy and courage by its resistance in North Africa where many of its members had shed their blood. The new militia and the police were now the only organized force which could maintain order in France. "If they did not exist common sense would demand that they should be created to bar the way to the occult and malignant forces which are seeking to destroy us."

More was to be heard of the S.O.L. as it was usually called. On January 14 Rome broadcast the news that Laval had allowed Deat to form a new militia in the occupied zone on the lines of his own force in the formerly unoccupied zone, and that the two bodies would amalgamate later and form

"the nucleus of a new party upon which the Laval Government will base their action in the sphere of internal politics." Obviously the Italians expected this party to wear black shirts. On the following day the head of the S.O.L. in French West Africa, who had been caught in France by the Allied landing in November, broadcast a message of encouragement to his followers in Senegal and called on them to take every opportunity of resisting all orders "given by General Giraud and the Allies," and bidding them think of France "subjected to increasing hardships through her betrayal by political generals . . . and act with all your strength against betrayal by these *matamores* (professional bullies)." The S.O.L. lived up to this promising beginning and assisted the often reluctant police to arrest, inform upon and otherwise oppress their patriotic compatriots who durst criticize Laval or resist the Germans. On January 31 Laval, speaking of his new force, said: "Though I do not wish to act unjustly or despotically, I am, nevertheless, carrying out firmly and by the means most appropriate to our country the necessary purge of every sphere of French life. We have done everything necessary to prevent France from suffering the calamity of Bolshevism . . . she should be body and soul with Germany to prevent that."

Meanwhile, the Germans were pressing Laval for more supplies of labour and materials. The Fighting French in Britain learnt early in February that when Hitler met Laval on December 19 he insisted that the French contribution to the cost of the army of occupation should be raised from Fr. 300,000,000 to Fr. 500,000,000 a day. He also demanded more rolling stock, rails and railway workers, and Laval was understood to have complied. On February 15 Vichy announced the promulgation of a law introducing compulsory labour for two years for the 1920-22 classes. This was a preliminary to

further collaboration with the Reich. On February 21 Laval informed the Press that the Germans had given permission for all Frenchmen "except Jews and undesirables," to pass freely between the occupied and the formerly unoccupied zones as from March 21. This, he assured the public, confirmed the improvement of Franco-German relations. In return Hitler had only asked for 250,000 more workers for Germany and had promised to release 50,000 prisoners and to release 250,000 more for service in German factories. Laval had now taken up the profession of slave-raider for the Reich with seeming enthusiasm. Vichy broadcasts combined hair-raising prophecies of the dreadful fate of France should Germany lose the war to the Bolshevist-Anglo-Saxon alliance, with appeals to the country to line up in the common defence of Europe. Frenchmen must prove their support of the New Order by "convinced action for Germany," but Germany would only recognize "energetic action backed by faith." Now de Brinon stated that as the Government stood beside Germany it was only fair that French workers should go to relieve Germans to fight on the Russian front. Now Vichy quoted Sauckel, Todt's successor, who told Parisian journalists that since Germany needed arms, while French workmen needed bread and work, they must therefore go to work in Germany. Hitler, he continued

"wants Germany and Europe to be free. You are now battling for Europe's independence for in the new Europe there will be no room for wars between Germany, France and other nations. . . . Hundreds of thousands of young men have shed their blood in the east and we are therefore entitled to ask France to take her share in defeating Bolshevism."

French workmen did not respond willingly to these appeals. In some cities the Gestapo had to undertake regular drives to round up labour for service in Germany. In others the refusal of ration cards to recalcitrants compelled them to choose between starvation or compliance. In the Department of Haute Savoie resistance took the form of a flight to the mountains where more than 1,000 demobilized officers and men were already "on their keeping" and defying the authorities. Reports

of fighting there after the proclamation of martial law were not confirmed, and it would seem that hunger and lack of arms soon compelled most of the fugitives to surrender to the police.

Elsewhere, however, the Germans encountered sharper if still sporadic resistance. There were riots in Paris, Lyons, Lille, Lorient (where 1,200 people were said to have been killed in recent Allied air raids, and the Germans had ordered all civilians whose presence was unnecessary to leave the port), Brest and Châlons. Vichy France saw bloodshed. It began late in January at Marseilles, where the Germans ordered the population out of the Old Port district and on some resistance being offered shot several persons and made thousands of arrests. A munitions train was blown up between Valence and Vienne and bombs were thrown at Nîmes. On March 11 Fighting French Headquarters received and broadcast a message from the Headquarters of the "Underground Movement" in France, announcing the destruction of a German troop train at Chagny near Châlons, and giving an impressive list of wrecked or damaged locomotives and rolling stock, blown bridges and other acts of sabotage. The rebels claimed that they had killed 282 German officers and men between December 20 and January 20. German executions of hostages, Laval's arrests of hundreds of political suspects had little effect.

The flight from Vichy was particularly noticeable among French serving diplomatists. In some cases they may have been merely descending on what now seemed the safer side of the fence, but their action was more often dictated by their detestation of Laval's policy and their tardy recognition of the fact that Pétain, whatever he may have intended, had in fact become Laval's echo and accomplice. The French Minister to Sweden resigned in January and placed himself at General Giraud's disposal. On January 20 Admiral Auphand was arrested by Laval's orders, and on the last day of the month the French National announced that M. René Massigli, Ambassador to Turkey when the armistice was signed, a diplomatist of great distinction, had escaped to

England where he was appointed National Commissioner for Foreign Affairs. On March 6 a decree issued at Vichy dismissed three former Ambassadors, M. Massigli, M. François Gentil and Count René de St. Quentin.¹ In March the Minister to Finland placed himself under General Giraud; a large proportion of the diplomatic and Consular Staffs in Spain tendered their resignations. The head of the French military mission to Brazil had already joined General de Gaulle in London, and he was followed by Lieutenant-General Beynet. From time to time Vichy announced that this or that well-known Frenchman, e.g. General Noguès and M. Peyrouton on January 24, Admiral Fénard, head of a French naval mission in the United States, on February 23, had been deprived of their nationality. But these measures had no more deterrent effect than the transfer of the principal prisoners in the abortive Riom trial, MM. Reynaud, Mandel and Blum, to Königsberg, the condemnation by the Germans of General de Lattre de Tassigny to ten years' imprisonment for attempting resistance to the invasion of Vichy France and like severities.

On March 26 changes in the Vichy Government were announced, not that they mattered particularly.

M. Barthelemy (Justice), General Jannequin (Air), M. Brevie (Colonies), Admiral Abrial and Admiral Platon (Navy) were dropped. The portfolios of the Colonies and the Navy were merged and entrusted to Admiral Bleau. General Bridoux became War and Air Minister. The Labour Department was raised to the status of a Ministry under M. Lagardelle, and the Ministries of Health and Families were merged under Dr. Grasset. It was announced at the same time that Laval had submitted certain legal reforms "rendered necessary by greater concentration of power," i.e. by Laval's intention to concentrate all executive power in his own hands, to the Marshal. On the same day it became known that the Vichy Minister to Portugal and his staff had resigned.

During this period the Germans had calmly incorporated Alsace and Lorraine in the Reich. The complete silence of the Vichy Government and Press testified to the subservience of the men who professed to rule France and to direct French opinion. They left it to General Giraud to tell his compatriots the truth about German relations with France.*

¹ q.v. *The Fourth Quarter*, p. 33.

² Cf. Chapter II, Section 4.

3 : THE ACCOMPLICES

Finland Signs of Finnish war-weariness and physical straits multiplied during the quarter. There was virtually no fighting on any of the fronts. On February 14 the Council of the Social-Democratic Party passed a recommendation by a large majority recommending the re-election of M. Ryti as President. Without a dissentient voice it also passed a resolution declaring that Finland was free to quit the war

"when a suitable opportunity occurs and when the country's liberty and independence are secured." The resolution significantly pointed out that Finland was waging an isolated war and was not fighting for the interests of the great Powers on either side. It emphasized the importance of closer relations between the U.S.A. and the Scandinavian nations, and added that it was "self-evident" that Finnish relations with Germany were "friendly and correct."

On February 15 M. Ryti was re-elected President by 269 votes to 31. Next day the Rangell Ministry offered their resignation but were apparently asked to carry on pending the formation of a coalition Cabinet. On February 27 the Agrarian Party made a public declaration in favour of the formation of an all-party Government whose main task should be to bring Finland's defensive war to an end. On March 1, according to the German news broadcasts, President Ryti had declared that Finland must continue the war which remained "the same war that started on November 30, 1939. He appears to have admitted that the people yearned for peace like other belligerents, but there was no sign of the war ending. The Finns must, therefore, harness all their energies." He claimed that since Finland's war was purely defensive and that the Finns, realizing the limitations of their forces, did not wish to go further than their position demanded in the clash between greater Powers.

The speech chilled American hopes that President Ryti might intend to seek a separate peace. On February 23 Mr. Sumner Welles had told Pressmen at Washington that on account of the real friendship between the U.S.A. and Finland for twenty-five years, it was

natural for the American Government to make it clear that they hoped that Finland would not continue to give effective military aid to the enemies of the United States and the other United Nations who were fighting for the kind of democracy in which Finland believed. On March 3, however, the Director of the Office of War Information told the Press that his information threw discredit on the stories that Finland had taken steps for a separate peace with Russia and added that President Ryti talked "as if he was going on fighting by the side of Germany." The Finns were not the first nation to discover that it is easier to enter an alliance with Germany than to escape from it.

After the Speaker of the Diet, M. Hakkila, had failed to form a coalition Ministry, Professor Edwin Linkomies, the Conservative Deputy-Speaker, succeeded on March 3. The new Ministry was composed of five Social-Democrats, four Agrarians, two Conservatives, two members of the Swedish Party, a Liberal and two non-party Ministers. These were Professor Linkomies's colleagues :

Foreign Affairs, M. Ramsay (non-Party) ; Interior, M. Ehrnrooth (Swedish Party) ; Defence, Major-General Walden (non-Party) ; Culture, Professor Krupp (Liberal) ; Justice, M. Lehtenen (Conservative) ; Finance, M. Tanner (Social-Democrat) ; Second Minister of Finance, M. Reinikka (Agrarian) ; Agriculture, M. Kalliokoski (Agrarian) ; Second Minister of Agriculture, Professor Ossara (non-Party) ; Transport and Public Works, Salovaara (Social-Democrat) ; Second Transport Minister, M. Ikonen (Agrarian) ; Supply, M. Allilae (Agrarian) ; Second Supply Minister, M. Aura (Social-Democrat) ; Trade and Industry, M. Takki (Social-Democrat) ; Social Affairs, M. Fagerholm (Social-Democrat).

M. Witting, who was notoriously pro-Nazi, M. Annala, who had represented Finnish National Socialism, and Pastor Kukkonen, the most Chauvinist orator in the previous Cabinet, were among the Ministers dropped. The Censorship office was then purged and the public began to prepare to hear of unpleasant realities. On March 15 a German official report which was so effusively worded that it seemed designed to prevent the Finns from even contemplating a separate peace was published. It made no important change in German deliveries. In Sweden there was a general impression that the new

Finnish Government was seeking a way out but that they feared that the Russians would demand severe terms, and they saw no practical means of persuading the Germans to evacuate northern Finland and might find it impossible to expel them.

Slovakia There were reports of widespread unrest in this unhappy country. It was certainly known that the Russian successes had been followed up with much interest and no small pleasure by many Slovaks and that troops recruited among the German minority had been sent to stiffen and, perhaps, to spy upon the Slovak units at the front. There were signs of a rift in the Triumvirate of President Tiso, Bela Tuka and Sano Mach, the last two reputedly far more pro-Nazi than the relatively moderate President, before the New Year ; in January, Bela Tuka, although remaining Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, lost the Vice-Presidency of the Hlinka Party, described as "the Slovak counterpart of the Nazi Party,"¹ if toy-terriers can be reckoned as the counterparts of wolves. Tuka's place was taken by Mederly, a deputy and one of the President's friends. Dancing was forbidden in December and the control of the Press and of wireless news grew more severe with time.

Hungary The heavy losses incurred by the Hungarian troops in Russia caused much anxiety and the Government deferred to popular opinion when they did not send back men who were on leave from the front. Compliance with German demands was less automatic than it had been. Thus in January the Government ordered the 300,000 agricultural workers who had been sent or lent to Germany to return, and in February reports from Italian sources told of friction between them and the German Minister who had protested against their refusal to allow 30,000 Hungarian lumbermen to return to Germany where they had been employed. Another sign of the times was a speech by the Cardinal Primate of Hungary at the annual

¹ In an article by H. G. Alexander, from which most of the above information is derived. (*Free Europe*, April 9.)

meeting of the Catholic St. Stephen's Academy in Budapest. He said that

the Magyars, who had been called a master-race, were not one nor would they wish to recognize another race as their masters. He spoke strongly by implication against totalitarian doctrines which ran counter to Christian morality. "Murder is murder," he said, "and the man who commits political murder or carries out mass executions for political reasons will be buried without any participation of the Church when he meets his death. Moreover, the Church will deny the sacraments to such as have helped to carry off others and send them to forced labour for ideological reasons." He would see that the view of his Church was observed within his own jurisdiction.

Late in February it was reported that Hitler was demanding twenty divisions for the Eastern front. This was bad hearing for the public who were beginning to learn that two-thirds of the Hungarian Second Army had been lost in Russia. On March 27 it was officially announced that *communiqués* about the Russian fighting would no longer be issued unless justified by some exceptional event.

Sabotage increased about the New Year and on **Rumania** January 6 reports from Hungary subsequently confirmed from Lisbon said that Horia Sima, of Iron Guard notoriety, had once more conspired against the Antonescu Government. Early in February news from Germany threw more light on the affair. It appeared that Sima and some seventy followers had arrived in Bucarest disguised in German uniforms and carrying forged papers purporting to have been signed by politicians whom they wished to discredit, urging peace with Russia. Sima as usual escaped, but most of his followers were caught. It was hard to resist the conclusion that the Germans knew more than they cared to admit of the hatching of this plot.

In January Archbishop Nicholas of Transylvania issued a pastoral letter which displeased the Germans.

The Rumanians, he said, had not borne their sacrifices in order to promote a new serfdom of the peoples. "If there are still some nations who cannot give up their desire to live on by the slave labour of other peoples, they will have an awakening from such dreams. Liberty is to nations what air is to man's body. All nations need liberty, for only in liberty the virtues, talents and aptitudes bestowed by God can grow and flourish among mankind."

More German troops, mostly of the youngest classes, were moved into the larger towns of Rumania, so Turkish reports said, during February. Early in March reports from the same quarter stated that the Minister and Under-Secretary of State for National Economy had resigned in protest against German insistence that Rumania should bear the whole cost of maintaining the newly-arrived German soldiers.

Bulgaria There was much unrest in which reserve officers and students took part in Bulgaria in January and there were many arrests. In February the police were active against the Agrarian Party and the unfortunate Jews. Early in the month a German Military Mission arrived to superintend the fortification of the Black Sea coast. On February 13 General Lukov, a former Minister of War and a leader of the pro-German faction, was shot by persons unknown, as was a high police official. There was great opposition to the dispatch of labour to Germany, and on March 27 their Consuls warned many subjects of the Axis Powers to leave the country. At the same time all army leave was cancelled. No persons not travelling had previously been forbidden to enter railway stations "as a precaution for the safeguarding of railway traffic."

Late in March news reached Istanbul that the Archbishop of Sofia and the Bishop of Plovdiv had protested against the expected extension to Bulgarian Jews of the deportation orders already applied to Jews residing in the Greek and Yugoslav provinces in Bulgarian military occupation. A number of deputies had raised the question in the Sobranie and the Prime Minister had promised that Jews possessing Bulgarian nationality would not be deported.

4 : THE NEUTRALS

Spain The chief political event during the quarter was the meeting of the new Cortes. Its members (*procuradores*) took the oath of allegiance on March 16. They were 438 in number, consisting of the following :

Ministers of the Government, 13 ; National Councillors of the Falange Party, 103 ; the Presidents of the Council of State, the Supreme Tribunal of Justice and the Supreme Council of Military Justice, 3 ; representatives of the syndicates, i.e. Trade Unions, 142 ; mayors of provincial capitals and of Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco and representatives of provincial municipalities, 102 ; rectors of universities, 12 ; presidents of the Royal Academies, 6 ; representatives of the institutes of lawyers, architects, pharmacists, doctors and veterinary surgeons, 7 ; members nominated by the Caudillo (General Franco), 50.¹

The Falange Español was strongly represented in the Cortes for it had a monopoly of Trade Union representation, and this, with its own representatives, gave it 245 *procuradores*, besides the Falangists in the Cabinet and those who might have been selected to represent municipalities. On the day on which the members took the oath of allegiance a new law was published, the effect of which was that persons accused of any political act likely to cause disorder or to provoke international conflicts would be tried by court martial. Don Esteban Bilbao, Minister of Justice, had been nominated President of the Cortes. General Franco appointed Don Eduardo Aunós Minister of Justice in his stead.

After the *procuradores* had taken the oath, the President made a characteristically Falangist speech full of the usual attacks on all Liberal regimes :

"stupid parliaments, fatal instruments of Spain's decadence, the empty rhetoric of pharisaical democrats, vacillating governments, conscienceless ministers who converted their offices into ante-chambers of crime, the lies of national sovereignty and the tragedy of Spain mangled by the rancour of classes and parties." It was observed that everything that recalled the Liberal past had been obliterated. "All paintings and inscriptions have gone from the walls," wrote the correspondent of *The Times*, "but the yokes of arrows, the emblem of the Falange, carved in gold, appear in the upper part of the Chamber." It was even more symptomatic of the tendencies of the regime that there was no accommodation for Press or public.

Opening the Cortes on March 17, General Franco said that the war would last a long time yet. Its objectives, he said, had changed completely since the date of its beginning. A short war would have made it possible for the primary objectives to be attained, but a war of six or seven years' duration would change the situation completely.

¹ This list was published by *The Times* on March 17 in a message from its correspondent at Madrid.

"The strength of both sides is great and incalculable, in spite of the ups and downs which battles may bring. Russia's presence on one side infuses into the fighting the character of a struggle to the death. . . ."¹

The Caudillo had not realized that for Great Britain the war had been a struggle to the death for a year before Hitler attacked Russia. The suggestion that we might have arranged a peace with Nazi Germany after a "short" and presumably unsuccessful war simply showed how little he understood our national temper.

Portugal A number of refugees of various creeds and nationalities, who had reached Portugal illegally or without papers and had been in hiding or in prison, were released in January, thanks to the initiative of Dr. Weissman of the Jewish World Committee and the goodwill of the Portuguese authorities, and were allowed to live a normal life with the status of transit travellers at the seaside village of Ericeira.

On February 17 the Government promulgated an important decree empowering them, in the event or imminence of war or serious emergency, "to mobilize under military control certain industries, enterprises and services." The decree, the correspondent of *The Times* in Lisbon explained (*loc. cit.*, February 18), also provided for the general mobilization of civilians employed in these services and industries, viz. :

All war production, posts, telephones and telegraphs ; transport by land, air and water, with mining, gas and electricity, and liquid fuels ; sea and river ports ; the loading and unloading of ships ; shipyards and naval offices ; chemical industries, particularly those connected with explosives ; food factories and such other services as the Council of Ministers might decide to include.

A scheme to transfer the control of foreign-owned public utility companies in Portugal to the State was approved by the Corporative Chamber in February. It provided that 65 per cent of capital must be Portuguese, and that all concerns dealing with public services must be Portuguese controlled with a Portuguese board of directors. The matter was referred to a commission

¹ Reuter's text.

which was instructed to report to the Assembly at its next quarterly session in May.¹

In spite of shortages of meat and milk and the dependence of Swiss industry on German raw materials and orders, the Swiss lived fairly comfortably—far more comfortably than any of their neighbours—and resisted the pressure of German propaganda. Early in February 17,000 foreign refugees were being cared for and the number was increased later in the month, and in March, by the influx of Alsatians and Savoyards escaping from German conscription or Laval's press-gangs. ^{Switzerland}

In his Speech from the Throne at the opening of the Riksdag on January 12, King Gustav said that owing to the risks to which Sweden was exposed by the war he had ordered "the strengthening of our military preparedness." On January 18 the Prime Minister, Hr. Hansson, in a speech in the Riksdag, revealed the contents of an order recently issued to all defence units by the Commander-in-Chief, General Thörnell, prescribing "the utmost resistance" in the event of an attack on the country. Hr. Hansson said that army units were being called up successively for short spells of concentrated battle training during the winter. These precautions were well received by the Press. ^{Sweden}

There were several cases of desertion on the part of unarmed German soldiers passing through Swedish territory to North Norway. They were treated as political refugees by the Swedes. On February 24 a German transport aeroplane made a forced landing in Western Sweden while *en route* to Norway and Finland. The aircraft was found to contain unmounted machine-guns. The machine was placed in Swedish military custody. The crew and passengers, nineteen in number, carried pistols. These were taken away, but returned to them after they had been sent across the Norwegian frontier. An agreement between Sweden and Germany

¹ The Assembly is not a legislature and its recommendations cannot become law until they have been incorporated in decrees by the Cabinet.

stipulated that German aircraft crossing Swedish territory must be unarmed and carry only civilian crews.

Hr. Günther, the Foreign Minister, explained that the Swedish Government had made representations to Berlin about the due observance of these conditions, but he told Parliament that in this case the transport of military passengers was not a breach of international law, since Norway had ceased to be a fighting front, and that the aeroplane could not be regarded as armed since the machine-guns were not mounted. The explanation did not satisfy the Press and sections of the Parliament criticized it. The British Government, who had frequently expressed their dissatisfaction at the Swedish Government's decision to allow German troops going on leave from Norway to pass through or over their territory, watched the discussion with interest.

On March 28 Hr. Sköld, Minister of Defence, in a speech at Stockholm, urged that Sweden should agree to a joint post-war foreign and defence policy with the other Scandinavian States, including Finland.

He defended Sweden's present policy as fundamentally sound, although it had "faulty spots." Of Sweden's critics he said that the Communists had wanted the Government "to fail Finland in the winter of 1939-40 and to turn away from Norway in 1940-41," while the National-Socialists and their likes were upbraiding them for not backing the certain German winner, and the activists who had urged intervention in the Finnish war would not realize that such intervention might have raised insuperable obstacles to the co-operation of the Western Powers and Russia in which these same activists now saw salvation.

Turkey The meeting between Mr. Churchill and President İnönü has been described in the first chapter of this chronicle. Anglo-Turkish relations remained excellent. On February 20, the Turkish Prime Minister, M. Sarajoglu, in a speech at the Angora People's House which gave a forecast of the Government's programme in the impending general election, used eloquent language to emphasize the mutual friendship and trust existing between the two countries. He gave an outline of the results of the Adana Conference and had obviously been deeply impressed by his conversations with Mr. Churchill. He dealt more summarily with his country's relations with the United States, Germany and Russia, reiterating the Government's wish to continue their close and amicable intercourse with nations to which they were bound by treaties and particularly thanking the United States for deliveries under the Lend-Lease

Act. On February 24 President İnönü, addressing the nation as the leader of the People's Party, said :

"Whether we continue to remain outside the war is not entirely a matter of our own volition. That is why we are sparing no sacrifice. We shall endeavour to increase our preparations more than ever. It is our duty to be vigilant both during and after the war. We shall do everything possible to avoid being involved in . . . the world upheaval which afflicts us and from which we suffer." He did not minimize the strain and suffering caused by the continued mobilization and the necessary adoption of a war economy, but he said that the nation's good will and confidence would enable the Government to bear their burden.

The election was completed on February 28. The New Grand National Assembly had 12 woman members and 4 non-Moslems among its 455 deputies. As the number of candidates of the single party exceeded the number of seats the electorate had more margin of choice than had been the case in previous elections, and those present at the first meeting of the new "Kamutai" were struck by its more youthful appearance. After the election, M. Sarajoglu tendered the resignation of the Cabinet and was asked by the President to form a new Ministry. This contained four new Ministers, all comparatively young men, viz. :

M. Fuat Sirmen (National Economy), M. Jelal Siren (Commerce), M. Suat Urguplu (Customs and Monopolies) and M. Ali Rıza Türel (Justice). The former Minister of Public Works, General Ali Fuat Jebesoy, a distinguished and energetic soldier, took over the Ministry of Communications, and the former Minister of National Economy, M. Siri Day, took over Public Works. "On the new Minister of Communications," wrote the Ankara correspondent of *The Times* (*loc. cit.*, March 12), "will fall the responsibility for the highest efficiency in Turkish land and sea communications, and the administration of the Turkish ports so necessary for the smooth carrying out of the programme which, based on the Adana decisions, will provide Turkey with means of perfecting her defensive power. . . ."

In announcing the Government's programme to the new Chamber on March 17, the Prime Minister said that the Government's policy was an exact continuation of their predecessor's. They would continue to safeguard the territories, the rights and the interests of the Turkish people. Henceforth that policy was not that of the Foreign Minister, nor that of the Government, nor even that of the Grand National Assembly. "That policy belongs to the nation and the sons of Turkey."

M. Sarajoglu said that one thing must be emphasized. That was Anglo-Turkish friendship :

"Since the Adana Conference we have got to know Mr. Churchill more intimately and to love him the better. Everywhere we find the outstretched hands of British statesmen with Mr. Churchill at their head. We listen to the cordial words of these statesmen. The House of Lords was yesterday¹ the scene of yet another manifestation of this friendship. Our British friends may rest assured that we cordially grasp these outstretched hands. . . . Anglo-Turkish friendship is not only dictated by emergencies or mutual interests, but also by the vital needs of both countries."

Of the United States, M. Sarajoglu said :

"When the American Congress was informed of the re-election of Ismet Inonu as head of the State it received the communication with a thunder of applause and now I, too, am sending in your name greetings and expressions of esteem to Republican and Democratic America."

Afghanistan continued to lead a quiet life. For Argentina see Chapter VI, Section 2.

¹ q.v. Chapter IX, Section 2.

CHAPTER IX

KING, MINISTERS AND PARLIAMENT

I : THE KING

The King exchanged New Year greetings with the Presidents of the United States, Soviet Russia and China. In all these messages his Majesty expressed the confident hope that 1943 would see further heavy blows struck by the Allies against their common enemies and that the campaigns of this year would hasten the final victory. Early in the year the King again visited many units of the Army and the R.A.F., and also spent four days at a Northern base with the Home Fleet. He spent a day with an Army division in the Eastern Command in January; and in February, as again in March, he inspected troops in training in the Scottish Command. On a visit to Canadian troops in the South-Eastern Command in February the King reviewed the First Canadian Army tank brigade, when troops mounted in Churchill tanks dipped six-pounder guns in salute as they roared past the saluting base. There were also present on this occasion General McNaughton, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief the Canadian Army, and Mr. Vincent Massey, Canadian High Commissioner in London. Accompanied by the Queen, his Majesty in January visited Fighter Command stations of the Royal Air Force in East Anglia. During this tour the Royal visitors saw the new Typhoon fighters leaving on offensive patrols and met Czech, Norwegian, Canadian, New Zealand and Australian pilots. On the same day the King presented a squadron badge to an Air-Sea Rescue Squadron which had saved over fifty airmen from the sea after their machines had been brought down in combat.

The King's fourth visit since the war began to the Home Fleet was made in March. This was just before Admiral Sir John Tovey struck his flag as Commander-in-Chief of the Home Fleet and the King's visit was

partly for the purpose of taking a personal farewell of the Admiral. On arriving at the naval base in the destroyer H.M.S. *Milne*, the King saw at anchor H.M.S. *King George V*, flagship of the Fleet, in company with the other new battleships *Duke of York* and *Howe*, together with cruisers, destroyers and aircraft-carriers. He was welcomed by Admiral Tovey and was the guest of the Commander-in-Chief aboard the flagship during the four days which he spent with the Fleet. In addition to going aboard ten ships—including a destroyer depôt ship in which he inspected detachments from every destroyer in the anchorage—the King visited naval air establishments ashore and was present at an E.N.S.A. concert.

In March the King was again accompanied by the Queen on a two-days' tour in the Midlands, when they inspected war factories and other industrial establishments. In the course of this tour they went to Nottingham and there inspected members of the Civil Defence and National Fire Services. They also visited a big Royal Army Ordnance Corps depôt where they saw a large quantity of newly manufactured tanks, some of them destined for Russia, and Army transport vehicles of all kinds. At an American Red Cross Day club they were greeted by American soldiers of the United States Army Air Corps. His Majesty held more investitures at the Palace and at one of these he presented decorations to the next-of-kin of 170 officers and other ranks of the Services who had lost their lives in the war.

The epic defence of Stalingrad by Soviet troops was marked in a specially appropriate fashion by the King. He presented to Stalingrad a Sword of Honour. On February 21, in a message to M. Kalinin, the King said :

"... It was the unyielding resistance of Stalingrad that turned the tide and heralded the crushing blows which have struck dismay into the foes of civilization and freedom. To mark the profound admiration felt by myself and the peoples of the British Empire, I have given commands for the preparation of a Sword of Honour, which it would give me pleasure to present to the city of Stalingrad. My hope would be that this gift might commemorate in the happier times to come the inflexible courage with which the warrior city steeled herself against the powerful and persistent onslaughts of her assailants, and that it might be a token of the admiration not only of the British peoples but of the whole civilized world."

This imaginative gift most happily expressed the admiration felt by the whole nation at the stout-hearted defence of Stalingrad. In the same message to M. Kalinin the King sent, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Red Army, a

"whole-hearted tribute to the heroic qualities and magnificent leadership whereby the Red Army, in its struggle against our common enemies, has, by its resounding triumphs, written new pages of history."

2 : MINISTERS AND PARLIAMENT

The Prime Minister's war conference with President Roosevelt at Casablanca and his subsequent visits to Turkey and to the victorious Eighth Army at Tripoli were followed with eager interest by Parliament and the nation alike, and aroused new admiration for the energy and zeal of our war leader. Mr. Churchill left London secretly in the second week in January for his rendezvous with the President and he returned to England on February 7, after having journeyed nearly 10,000 miles by air in a Liberator bomber. Everybody was gratified at the news of his safe return from this further Odyssey. Within a few days he made a report to the House of Commons—which had already given him a very cordial welcome back—and this was one of the most important and informative of his war reviews.

In the first sentences of this speech—made on February 11—Mr. Churchill told, in stark language, the whole purpose of the Casablanca meeting. He said :

"The dominating aim which we set before ourselves at the Conference at Casablanca was to engage the enemy's forces on land, sea and in the air on the largest possible scale and at the earliest possible moment. The importance of coming to ever closer grips with the enemy and intensifying the struggle outweighs a number of other considerations which ordinarily would be decisive in themselves. We have to make the enemy burn and bleed in every way that is physically and reasonably possible, in the same way as he is being made to burn and bleed along the vast Russian front from the White Sea to the Black Sea. But this is not so simple as it sounds. Great Britain and the United States were formerly peaceful countries, ill-armed and unprepared. They are now warrior nations, walking in the fear of the Lord, very heavily armed, and with an increasingly clear view of their salvation. We are actually possessed of very powerful and growing forces, with great masses of munitions coming along. The problem is to bring these forces into action. The United States has vast oceans to cross

in order to close with her enemies. We also have seas or oceans to cross in the first instance, and then for both of us there is the daring and complicated enterprise of landing on defended coasts and also the building-up of all the supplies and communications necessary for vigorous campaigning when once a landing has been made. . . ."

It was for this reason, he continued, that warfare against the U-boats took the first place on the agenda of the Casablanca Conference. Since the defeat of the U-boat and the improvement of the margin of shipbuilding resources was the prelude to all effective aggressive operations, the task of combating the U-boat had been given first priority in all Anglo-American plans. Although our losses at sea were heavy we were holding our own in this war against the enemy submarines, and during the past six months British, American and Canadian new building had exceeded all the shipping losses of the United Nations by over 1,250,000 tons. The number of U-boats was increasing, but so were their losses and our means of attacking them.

The great need was for more escort vessels, for nothing was more clearly proved than that well-escorted convoys, especially when protected by long-distance aircraft, beat the U-boats. Out of about 3,000,000 soldiers who had been moved across the seas under the protection of the Navy only about 1,348 had been killed or drowned at sea. Therefore, to reduce the waste of valuable lives and ships and cargoes in merchant shipping convoys it had been decided to increase the production of escort vessels, even though that meant some impingement on new building of merchant ships. The Prime Minister referred to the flood of American new building of all kinds of ships and confidently predicted that in shipping we should be better off at the end of 1943 than at the beginning, and that we should be still better off at the end of 1944, assuming that the war continued until then. We were upon a rising tide of tonnage. That was the governing fact of the situation.

The more the sinkings were reduced the more vehement our Anglo-American war effort would be. The enemy could not avert his doom by U-boat warfare, but he might delay it; it was for us to shorten that delay by every conceivable effort. Mr. Churchill went on :

"It was only after full and cold, sober and mature consideration of all these facts, on which our lives and liberties certainly depend, that the President, with my full concurrence as agent of the War Cabinet, decided that the note of the Casablanca Conference should be the unconditional surrender of all our foes. But our inflexible insistence upon unconditional surrender does not mean that we shall stain our victorious arms by any cruel treatment of whole populations. But justice must be done upon the

wicked and the guilty, and, within her proper bounds, justice must be stern and implacable. No vestige of the Nazi or Fascist power, no vestige of the Japanese war-plotting machine, will be left by us when the work is done, and done it certainly will be."

Mr. Churchill told how the Anglo-American military, naval and air experts spent eleven days at Casablanca in a professional examination of the whole scene of the world war. "We have now," he said, "a complete plan of action . . . and this plan we are going to carry out, according to our ability, during the next nine months, before the end of which we shall certainly make efforts to meet again." The Anglo-American unanimity achieved, said the Prime Minister, did not diminish their great regret that Premier Stalin and some of his distinguished generals could not be at Casablanca. President Roosevelt—in spite of the physical disability which he had so heroically surmounted—had been willing to go as far as Khartoum to make possible a tripartite conference. But the Russian offensive was already in full swing and Premier Stalin could not leave his post even for a single day.

Although Stalin was absent, said Mr. Churchill, "our duty to aid to the utmost in our power the magnificent, tremendous effort of Russia and to try to draw the enemy and the enemy's air force from the Russian front was accepted as the first of our objectives once the needs of the anti-U-boat warfare were met in such a way as to enable us to act aggressively." British and American strategists, he emphasized, were unanimous in adhering to their decision of a year before that the defeat of Hitler and the breaking of the German power must have priority over the decisive phase of the war against Japan. The Prime Minister continued :

"I have already some two months ago indicated that the defeat of the enemy in Europe may be achieved before victory is won over Japan ; and I made it clear that in that event all the forces of the British Empire, land, sea and air, will be moved to the Far Eastern theatre with the greatest possible speed, and that Great Britain will continue the war by the side of the United States with the utmost vigour until unconditional surrender has been forced upon Japan. With the authority of the War Cabinet I renewed this declaration in our conference at Casablanca. I offered to make it in any form which might be desired, even embodying it in a special Treaty if that were thought advantageous. The President, however, stated that the word of Great Britain was quite enough for him. We have already, of course, bound ourselves, along with all the rest of the United Nations, to go on together to the end, however long it may take or however grievous the cost may be. . . ."

Turning to the Pacific, Mr. Churchill congratulated our American Allies on the decisive victory at Guadalcanal and expressed admiration of the hard-won successes of

Australian and American forces who, under their brilliant commander, General MacArthur, had taken Buna in New Guinea. For the time being the British effort in the war against Japan was confined to operations to clear Burma, to open the Burma Road, and to give what aid could be given to China. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek—who was also unable to attend the Casablanca Conference—had concurred in the plans for future action in the Far East submitted to him as the result of the deliberations and had expressed his satisfaction at the strong additional help that would be provided for China.

Mr. Churchill next described his visit to Turkey, which, he said, was undertaken with the full assent of the Turkish President.¹ He told the House that a British and Turkish Joint Military Mission was now sitting at Ankara to press forward the development of Turkish defensive strength, the improvement of communications, and—by the reception of new weapons—the bringing of her army to the highest pitch of efficiency.

The Prime Minister went on to speak of his subsequent visits to Cyprus and Cairo. In Cairo he found that the enemy, who were only sixty miles from Alexandria on the occasion of his former visit, had been rolled back 1,500 miles after the Battle of Egypt.

Such an advance by such powerful and heavily-equipped forces was without parallel in modern war. Everywhere in Egypt there was a feeling that Britain had kept her word; that we had been a faithful and unfailing ally; and that we had preserved the Nile Valley from the horrors of invasion. He told next of his visit to the Eighth Army at Tripoli, ten days after the enemy had been driven out of that city. Tripoli was described as "the first Italian city to be delivered by British arms from the grip of the Huns," and he spoke of the lively enthusiasm of the Italian population and of the effusiveness of the demonstrations of which he was the object. The House heard of how Mr. Churchill at Tripoli had reviewed 40,000 troops of the 51st (Highland) Division and the New Zealand Division. These troops, he said, paraded after their immense ordeal as if they had come out of Wellington barracks. In all his life he had never seen troops who marched with the style and air of those of the Desert Army. The fighting men of democracy felt that they were coming into their own. Mr. Churchill also paid tribute to "this vehement and formidable General, Montgomery, a Cromwellian figure, austere, severe, accomplished, tireless, his life given to the study of war, who has attracted to himself in an extraordinary measure the confidence and devotion of the Army." He also spoke in warm

¹ His comments differed but slightly from those recorded in Chapter I, Section 1 of this volume, q.v.

praise of General Alexander, on whom the over-riding responsibility lay. An explanation was also given of the various changes in the High Command made necessary by the movements of the Armies in Africa.

We had already agreed that the operations in North-West Africa should be an American enterprise; and we willingly accepted the arrangement whereby General Eisenhower became Allied Commander-in-Chief in that theatre.

Of the political troubles of the French in North-West Africa Mr. Churchill said only that he was less interested in the past records of French functionaries whom the Americans had deemed it expedient to employ than with the safety and success of the Armies. He told the House that there must be nearly 250,000 enemy troops now in "the Tunisian tip," and he gave the warning that serious battles would still have to be fought. General Giraud, who commanded the French Army in Tunisia, had agreed to this Army being placed under General Anderson's command, and a similar arrangement would apply to the strong United States forces which had been moved forward into Tunisia.

In concluding his survey the Prime Minister said that the Government awaited the unfolding of events with sober confidence. They were sure, he added, that Parliament and the nation would show in these hopeful days "the same qualities of steadfastness as they did in that awful period when the life of Britain and of our Empire hung by a thread."

In the short debate that followed, Mr. Arthur Greenwood and others welcomed the Prime Minister on his safe return from a long and hazardous journey, and there was generally acknowledgment of the historic importance of the meeting at Casablanca and the subsequent events. The one note of criticism, which was repeated in the speeches of several Labour members in particular, related to the Anglo-American collaboration on grounds of military expediency with French elements in North Africa who were described as Fascist and pro-Vichy. Mr. Eden, in a brief reply, thanked the House for the restraint that it had shown and said that from the point of view of winning the war the most important thing was that Frenchmen who wanted to fight the Germans should be united. There were indications that Frenchmen were getting together of their own volition and consequently any backing of one or another individual by us was not likely to promote the process.

A week later Mr. Churchill became ill and he was not seen in the House again for a month. His illness was

more serious than was at first known to the public, and it was only when he was on the way to recovery that a bulletin mentioned that he had been suffering from pneumonia. There was much public relief at the news of his recovery. After a short convalescence in the country he returned to the House of Commons on March 16 and received cordial congratulations on his restoration to health. His illness was probably caused by the fatigue of his journeys in the Middle East and the sudden change from sunny North Africa to the chilliness of February in London. Fortunately, the Prime Minister quickly recovered his former robust health and energy. He signalized his return to full activity by taking upon himself more work than usual. Towards mid-March Mr. Eden left for Washington and, in his absence, the Prime Minister both acted as Leader of the House of Commons and exercised a general supervision over the Foreign Office, in addition to his own arduous duties as Minister of Defence.

During Mr. Churchill's absence through illness considerable excitement arose in the House of Commons about the Government's attitude to the recommendations for the extensive post-war social security plan contained in the Beveridge Report. The Government allotted three days for a debate on the Report in the Commons and the debate began under favourable auspices on February 16. Mr. Greenwood who, as a member of the War Cabinet, had commissioned Sir William Beveridge to investigate the social services—opened the debate by submitting a motion to which all parties had agreed in advance.

This motion merely welcomed the Report as "a comprehensive review of the present provisions in the sphere of the social insurance and allied services and as a valuable aid in determining the lines on which development and legislation should be pursued as part of the Government's policy of post-war reconstruction." At an earlier stage it had been thought probable that the Government would hear the Commons debate before framing their own conclusions on the Report. Although they received little credit for it, the Government did better than that by

informing the House of their provisional conclusions in the course of the debate. It was regarding the interpretation to be put upon these conclusions that the House became divided and restive. The first speaker for the Government was Sir John Anderson, Lord President of the Council, and it was he who announced the Government's decisions so far as they went. Sir John Anderson is not in the front rank of political orators, and although his announcement actually represented the provisional acceptance by the Government of the substance of the Beveridge plan—which meant a great advance in social policy—his speech was so overlaid with qualifications and reservations that most Labour Members, and some others, were left thoroughly dissatisfied and suspicious of the Government's intentions.

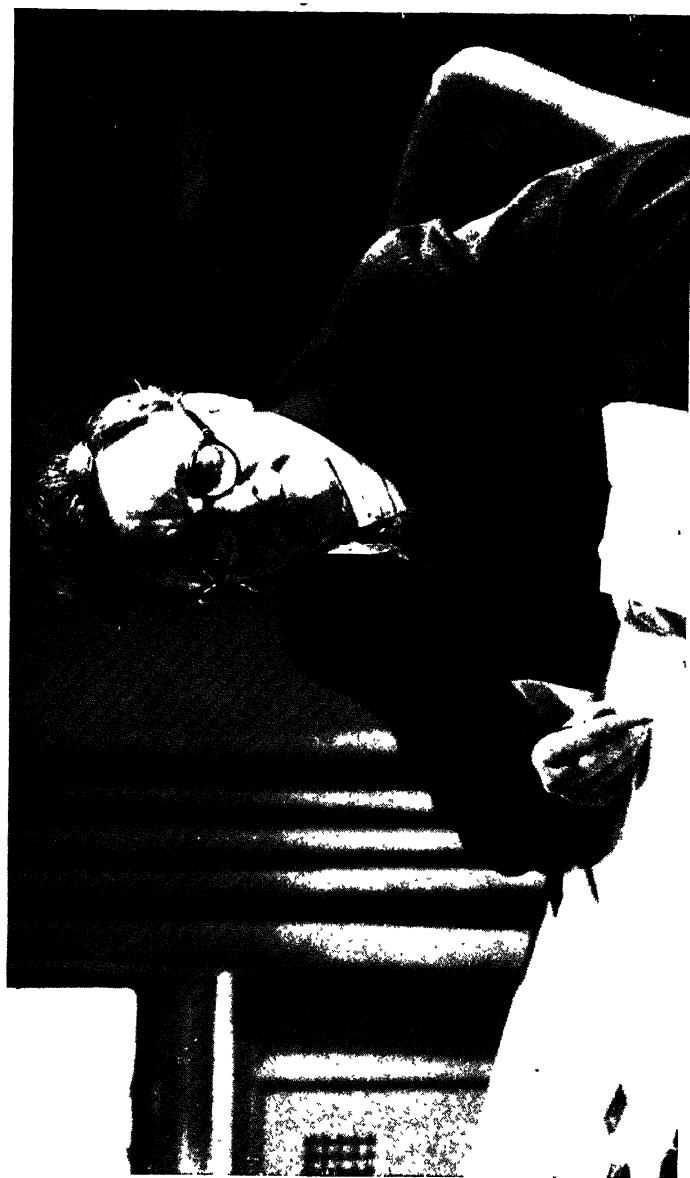
Sir John Anderson emphasized more than once that he was announcing provisional conclusions by the Government and that there could not be at this stage any final commitments. Nobody, he said, could pronounce with any certainty on what the country's financial position would be at the end of the war. He agreed that social insurance must take a high priority among post-war reconstruction plans, but there would also be insistent demands for heavy expenditure on national defence, the service of the National Debt, education, housing, civil aviation and Colonial development, to name only some items. However, the Government did not propose to be deterred by financial doubts from putting their plans into shape and they proposed to bring their social service plans as rapidly as possible to the stage of draft legislation. By that time other post-war plans would have been correspondingly advanced and the Government and Parliament could then take their decision in the light of the fullest information about the financial situation then available. The Minister went on to announce that the Government adopted the first basic assumption of the Beveridge Report, that everything possible would be done after the war to maintain full employment; and they also accepted in principle the other two basic assumptions, the introduction of a comprehensive medical service and the institution of a system of children's allowances.

The comprehensive medical service visualized was one that would ensure "that for every citizen there is available whatever medical treatment he requires, in whatever form he may require it." The Minister of Health and the Secretary of State for Scotland would begin consultations with the organizations representing doctors, local authorities and the hospitals, and the necessary legislation would be prepared. Sir John Anderson indicated the Government's view that the main features which should determine the general nature of this reorganization of the nation's health services must include administration by the well-tried machinery of local government; the safeguarding of the interests of doctors and of the great voluntary hospitals; and the maintenance of the free choice of doctor and the family doctor relationship as the background of general medical practice. The Government's decision about family allowances was that the rate should be fixed at 5s. a week for the second and succeeding children

in a family, instead of the 8s. recommended by Sir William Beveridge. At the same time it was proposed to extend the provision of meals and other child welfare services in the schools. The Beveridge Report assumed the average over-all cost to the taxpayer of these services at present to be 1s. per child per week. The Government aimed at going far beyond that, and they saw no difficulty in providing services equivalent in money value to 2s. 6d., and even more, per head per week.

With regard to the main scheme Sir John Anderson announced the Government's provisional conclusions as follows: The proposal for bringing all classes of persons within the ambit of compulsory social insurance was accepted. The adoption of the subsistence basis for rates of benefit was not accepted. This principle would imply the variation of benefits up and down with changes in the cost of living and, presumably, a corresponding variation in the rates of contribution. This seemed to the Government very difficult, if not impracticable, in a scheme where benefit was intended to bear a close relation to contributions; and it could not be applied to old age pensions. The Government agreed that sickness and unemployment benefits should be at the same rate, and they hoped that it would be possible to fix rates not widely different from those recommended in the Report. They felt that there would have to be stronger safeguards against abuses than were proposed in the Report and that both unemployment and disability benefit would have to be made of limited duration. There might be room for the intervention of some suitable tribunal; and, in the case of disability benefit, an invalidity pension might be substituted after a prescribed period had elapsed.

The old age pension proposals were regarded as one of the most difficult features of the Report, partly because of the heavy cost involved—a cost rising to £300,000,000 a year in 1965. Under the plan contributions would be payable, but full benefit would not be available to anybody for twenty years. The Government preferred a different approach, with fixed contributions and benefits now, even if the initial pension was somewhat higher than that recommended in the Beveridge Report. There were various objections to the workmen's compensation proposals in the Report and the Government thought



MR. HERBERT MORRISON

that this part of the plan called for further consideration. The Government agreed, though with regret, that there was no longer a place for the approved societies under changed conditions. But these institutions had become part of the essential structure of our social system, and if any method could be devised whereby the societies could continue to act as agents in the administration of the national scheme—the Government would gladly consider it. The Government also agreed that a funeral grant should be one of the benefits under a unified system of social insurance. The amount of this grant would require further consideration.

Sir William Beveridge's proposal that the business of industrial assurance might be converted into a public service (without regarding this as an integral part of his plan) was not accepted, and the widow's pension proposals in the Report were reserved for further consideration. It was agreed that the administration of the entire social security scheme ought to be consolidated into one organization, either a new Ministry of Social Security, as suggested in the Report, or some kind of Statutory Board. In any case the new organization would be set up as soon as Parliament had passed legislation introducing the new scheme.

In concluding his speech Sir John Anderson said that while there could be at present no binding commitments, and while the Government did not completely prejudge these questions until they had heard the views of the House, he had made it clear that "the Government adopted the scheme in principle." No reservations he had made would affect the speed and vigour of the Government's preparations.

"The Government," he said, "will press forward with the preparation of a Bill, or group of Bills, and when these have been completed they will review their policy, and Parliament will have an opportunity of pronouncing on the scheme as a whole, in relation to other schemes, and in the light of the financial situation as it can best be estimated at that time."

The disappointment felt by Labour Members—and some Members of other parties, too—after this speech reflected their impression that the Government were fighting a delaying action and that they had no intention of passing any of the preparatory legislation before the war ended. It was thought that the Government attitude was too much conditioned by doubts and hesitations about finance; and in the mood of the moment

Labour Members, in particular, were very impatient of any suggestions that the country might not be able after the war to afford this social security plan. Sir John Anderson's denial that his speech meant there was to be no legislation before the end of the war did not check the adverse criticism. At a meeting held the same day the Administrative Committee of the Labour Party decided to table an amendment to make the motion before the House read as follows :

"That this House expresses its dissatisfaction with the now declared policy of His Majesty's Government towards the Report of Sir William Beveridge on social insurance and allied services and urges the reconsideration of that policy with a view to the early implementation of the plan."

It was decided, however, that the Labour Party should hear the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the second day of the debate before deciding whether this amendment should be pressed in the House with the official backing of the whole Party. Sir Kingsley Wood's speech did nothing to make the Government's policy attractive to those who had been disappointed by Sir John Anderson's speech. On the contrary, the Chancellor's speech was regarded as having rather whittled down what the Lord President of the Council had said by dwelling even more on the financial implications of the scheme and on the impossibility of entering into final commitments at this stage. As the debate proceeded the criticisms made by Liberal and Labour Members grew sharper and there were repeated demands that the Government should at least give some token of their intention to take early action on the recommendations in the Report. A group of Conservative Members—most of them younger men of the Party—joined to some extent in criticizing the Government and some forty of them supported an amendment tabled by Lord Hinchings-brooke which called upon the Government "to set up forthwith the proposed Ministry of Social Security for the purpose of giving effect to the principles of the Report."

The Chancellor's speech having convinced the Labour Party that the Government intended no advance on the policy and procedure announced by Sir John Anderson,

there developed an awkward political situation. In spite of speeches of explanation at private meetings of the Party by Mr. Attlee, Mr. Morrison and Mr. Bevin and appeals by these leaders to their colleagues to take no action which might threaten the national unity, the Parliamentary Labour Party decided to give full official backing to the amendment previously referred to and to press the issue to a division against the Government if necessary. Since the Labour Party is one of the major parties supporting the Government, with strong representation in the War Cabinet and in other Ministerial offices, this was a serious and disturbing decision. Among other things it appeared to mean—though the majority of Labour Members stoutly contested this interpretation—a vote of censure on the Labour Ministers. The Government policy presented to the House by Sir John Anderson was known to represent the unanimous view of the War Cabinet, for which the Labour Ministers took full responsibility. It was an agitated meeting of the Party at which Labour Members took their decisions, and they did so in spite of some very plain speaking by Mr. Bevin.

When the debate entered its third day the Labour Party amendment was duly called for debate. It was moved by Mr. James Griffiths, a Welsh miners' Member who is one of the front-benchers of the Party. His speech expressed very clearly the doubts and criticisms which had been raised in the minds of Labour Members. The following are some passages from his speech :

"This is the first debate in which we have been called upon to make a decision upon the shape of post-war Britain. I would beg hon. Members in every part of the House to realize what this first decision upon reconstruction means to the people of this country, to the House of Commons, to the whole democratic system and to the Government. The Beveridge plan has become in the minds of the people and the nation both a symbol and a test. It has become . . . a symbol of the kind of Britain we are determined to build when the victory is won, a Britain in which the mass of the people shall be ensured security from preventable want. . . . The widespread interest taken in it and in its proposals and the almost universal support given to it are clear indications that the Report and the plan meet a deep-felt need in the minds and hearts of our people. . . . In addition to being a symbol, this plan of Sir William Beveridge's has become a test, a test of the sincerity of our professions and our promises. . . ."

Some Conservatives held that the Government had bungled the debate, and that while in fact having—as far as they could reasonably in advance—agreed in principle to almost revolutionary changes of social policy they had presented their case badly. It must be recorded, however, that most Conservatives—and the Conservatives are by far the strongest Party in the House—entirely agreed with the reservations which the Government had made and they accepted it as the plainest common sense that the Government must have regard both to financial situation in the post-war period and to relative priorities in carrying out post-war reconstruction plans. A few Conservative Members thought, and said, that the Government had actually gone too far. Most Liberals shared the critical attitude of Labour Members, and for similar reasons.

It was left to Mr. Herbert Morrison, Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security, to make the final speech for the Government in the debate. In a crowded and excited House he made one of the best Parliamentary speeches of his career. He was not able to add to the substance of what had been said by the Ministers who had preceded him but he expounded the Government proposals and their implications more skilfully and gave an effective answer to the criticism that the Government were really seeking to side-track the social security plan. He claimed credit for the Government's performance in having reached and submitted provisional conclusions on this complex scheme within twelve weeks of the publication of the Report. Subject to certain reservations and considerations the Government had committed themselves, broadly speaking, to acceptance of the principles of the Beveridge plan. Mr. Morrison insisted that the Government were right in paying careful attention to the financial considerations involved. Even when in Opposition, he said, he had always refused to be any more loose about the finances of the country than he was prepared to be loose about the finances of the London County Council when he was the leader of that body. "There has been," he said, "too much of parties in

Opposition, or semi-detached Opposition, giving reckless undertakings and making rather wild promises and then not carrying them out when they are in power. I will not be a party to any such political jiggyery-pokery."

Analysing the Government announcement, Mr. Morrison showed that of twenty-three suggested changes contained in the Beveridge proposals the Government had accepted sixteen. Six more suggestions were left wholly or partly open for further consideration in the light of the debate and such other representations as they might receive, the general implication being that the Government would take action upon them in some form.

Only one of the suggested changes, that relating to the making of industrial assurance into a public service, had for the time being been rejected. That particular suggestion Sir William Beveridge agreed was not essential to the social security plan. The Government had also accepted the three fundamental assumptions of the Report—maintenance of employment, the creation of a comprehensive health service and the introduction of children's allowances. On the question of setting up immediately a Ministry of Social Security, Mr. Morrison argued that as a matter of practical business this would not be the best way to forward the Government plans, and that it was better at this stage for the necessary preparations to be made by the Government Departments most concerned, and for the work to be directed under the supervision of a strong Cabinet Committee. On this point his argument impressed the whole House. Mr. Morrison continued:

"The decisions of the Government were not lightly made, nor could they have been lightly made. The House will realize that no Government could lightly commit themselves publicly to such decisions of principle unless they meant business as soon as definite action was practicable. To suppose that our attitude was otherwise, to suppose that we gravely made these announcements and did not mean business, is to suppose a fantastic degree of duplicity on the part of the Government and a gullibility on the part of the British people which I have never noticed."

Mr. Morrison also emphasized that although this was a great scheme it did not cover the whole ground of social security. The greater problem remained and that was how best this community could get its living on a reasonable standard of life. In conclusion he said that he had spoken for a united Government, and in the light of all the facts, when the country was at war, he felt that a heavy responsibility would rest on those who took any action which might have the serious political consequences that any defeat of the Government on this issue might involve.

The Home Secretary's speech did not prevent a division, but it almost certainly prevented more votes being

given against the Government than might otherwise have been expected. The younger Conservatives who had been critical were able to vote for the Government with an easy conscience after hearing Mr. Morrison's very definite statement that the Government really meant business. The Labour Party heard the speech in silence, and as Mr. Morrison proceeded they looked increasingly uncomfortable. They were committed in advance to voting against the Government; and their attitude suggested that Mr. Morrison's speech had almost convinced them that they would be acting without real justification in doing so. When the debate ended Mr. Greenwood, who had submitted the original motion to the House, rose to say that he must now associate himself with the Labour Party amendment. The division resulted in the rejection of the Labour amendment by 335 votes to 119, and the original motion was carried.

Of the 121 members (including the two tellers) who voted against the Government 97 were Labour Members, including some who were Parliamentary Private Secretaries to Labour Ministers. Labour votes cast for the Government numbered only 23, including those of 21 Labour Ministers. This division put the Labour Ministers in an embarrassing situation and they felt that the revolt of their Party had weakened their authority in the Government. They bluntly told their Labour colleagues that any repetition of such tactics would make it difficult for the representatives of the Labour Party to continue in the Administration.

The unofficial Labour members, however, did not take this view; nor did their leader, Mr. Greenwood. They argued that on this domestic issue, which did not directly affect the prosecution of the war, they were entitled to record their vote as an expression of their dissatisfaction with Government policy, without in any way wishing to impair national unity or to withdraw general support of the Government. In support of this argument they quoted the action of a large body of Conservative Members in voting against the Government only a few days before on the Catering Wages Bill, to which reference is made below. There was a sharp internal controversy which kept the Parliamentary Labour Party—and the whole Labour movement—in a ferment for some time after the division. Having discussed the matter among themselves more than once, the Labour Ministers decided that the situation did not call for any resignations from the Government. Mr. Bevin was in an angry mood about the Party revolt

and his relations with the Labour Party were a subject of lively speculation for some days.

The controversy subsided within two or three weeks—so far as its public manifestations went—and it had no serious political consequences affecting the stability of the National Government. Labour Members continued to assert that they had intended no censure upon their own Ministers and that their action had stimulated the Government to more vigorous action.

In the following week the Government policy on the Beveridge plan was debated for two days in the House of Lords on a motion by Lord Nathan. Other peers who followed him, including Lord Samuel, joined him in criticizing the Government statements in the Commons as having been hesitant, vague and unsatisfactory. The Archbishop of Canterbury and his predecessor in that office, Archbishop Lord Lang, both urged the Government to set up a Ministry of Social Security at once as an earnest of their intention to press forward with the social security plan. Lord Dawson addressed himself to the Government's decision to set up a comprehensive national health service and stated his views as to the way in which the plan should be developed.

He emphasized that the medical profession must be given an adequate share in the administration of such a scheme if it was to work successfully. Not all the speakers criticized the Government policy. Lord Rushcliffe, for instance, spoke with an authoritative knowledge of social service administration against the creation of a Ministry of Social Security at this stage. The Lord Chancellor, who was the principal Government spokesman, added nothing to the Government's statement of policy in the Commons, but he made a vigorous reply to the critics and sought to show that the Government had undertaken much more than they were being given credit for. He did not admit that there was any attempt on the part of the Government to delay the plan, but he made it equally plain that the Government would not allow itself to be hustled into ill-considered action on such complex issues. Lord Simon particularly stressed the argument that "social security" in its proper sense included much more than providing for the unfortunate and that while insurance against misfortune had an essential place in the true conception of social security it would be a great mistake to overlook the true relation of the part to the whole. Lord Snell, who also spoke for the Government, underlined these arguments, and said that the Government's insistence that regard must be had to relative priorities in post-war commitments was not a rebuff to the Beveridge Report, but "Beveridge reduced, as it were, to reality." He also claimed that the Government had approved between 80 and 90 per cent of the recommendations in the Report.

Just before the Commons debate on the Beveridge Report there had been another controversy, though on a smaller scale, about an issue of domestic politics. Mr. Bevin, Minister of Labour and National Service, introduced a Bill to provide for the regulation of wages and conditions of employment in the catering trades. Even before the Bill was introduced a large body of Conservative M.P.s, headed by Sir Douglas Hacking, signified their strong objection to it.

Their argument was that this proposal had been the subject of acute party political controversy in the past, and that since such a Bill had no relation to the prosecution of the war it should not be introduced now, particularly in view of a promise given to the House on behalf of the Government that it would not be appropriate in war-time to bring forward "legislation of a character which is likely to arouse serious controversy between the political parties." The critics also objected to the procedure proposed. They asserted that they had no objection to whatever measures might be necessary for ensuring tolerable conditions of employment in the catering trades, but they asked that the need for Government intervention should be first established by an impartial inquiry. The Minister did not listen to these arguments, and he proceeded with the Bill. His answer to the objection that this was legislation which represented a breach of the Government's undertaking about controversial legislation was that the Bill had the unanimous backing of the Cabinet, in which all parties were represented, and that in these circumstances it could not be regarded as a measure which was seriously controversial. Mr. Bevin also claimed that the Bill merely continued an industrial policy which had been pursued by successive Governments for years.

Mr. Bevin submitted the Bill for second reading in the Commons on February 9. He argued that to some extent it was necessary for war purposes since there were now over 8,000 industrial canteens to be staffed, and it might prove necessary, to guarantee the continuance of an important public service, to ensure the maintenance of the necessary staffs by the application of an Essential Works Order or some similar measure. But he justified the Bill mainly on the ground that it was necessary to improve and make more attractive conditions of employment in an industry which he believed capable of great and beneficial expansion after the war.

Sir Douglas Hacking moved the rejection of the Bill on the ground that the measure was neither necessary for the prosecution of the war nor was backed by a general measure of agreement in the House, which involved a breach of the undertaking regarding controversial legislation. If it was proved after impartial inquiry that this industry was working under bad

conditions, said this speaker, all opposition to the Bill would be withdrawn. But the Minister had refused to adopt that procedure. Moreover, the Bill went beyond wage regulation for it also made provision for regulating "the efficiency and development" of the industry.

After a lively debate the House went to a division and the second reading was carried by 285 votes to 118. This was the biggest vote ever recorded against the Government up to that time; but since it was on a domestic issue it did not affect the general support of the House for the Government in the prosecution of the war. The vote against the Bill was bigger than had been expected, even by those who led the opposition. An analysis of the voting showed that of the 118 votes against the Bill, 111 were those of Conservatives, and that only 107 Conservatives, including Ministers and others in varying degree associated with the Government, voted for the second reading. The Labour Party were able to pray in aid this Conservative example of opposition to a Government measure when they later voted against the Government in the debate on the Beveridge Report.

An event of outstanding importance was a broadcast by the Prime Minister on March 22, in the course of which for the first time he dealt with questions of post-war policy, both international and domestic. The speech was mainly on post-war domestic policy, and Mr. Churchill explained that it was delivered in an attempt to simplify and mollify political divergences so as to enable all our political forces to march forward in unity to the main objective of winning the war. He did not share the sanguine hopes of those who seemed to think that the war might be over very soon and in advising even more zealous concentration on the war effort he told his countrymen "not to take your eye off the ball even for a moment." On the subject of post-war social policy he gave a warning against attempts to coerce the Government to bind themselves or their successors, in conditions which no one could foresee and which might be years ahead, "to impose great new expenditure on the State without any relation to the circumstances which might prevail at that time, and to make them pledge themselves to particular schemes without relation to other extremely

important aspects of our post-war needs." He was absolutely determined, he said, not to falsify or mock the confidence reposed in him by the country through dark days by making promises without regard to whether they could be performed or not.

The Prime Minister visualized the possibility of victory over Germany some time in 1944, or perhaps in 1945, and said that while this would mark the grand climax of the war we should afterwards have to transport all the necessary forces to the other side of the world to assist our Allies in finishing the war against Japan. This was what seemed to him the most likely situation. There would be large numbers of British soldiers—and also, no doubt, United States soldiers—whom it would not be physically possible to employ across the vast distances and poor communications of the Japanese war; and after making full provision for the garrisoning of the guilty enemy countries, there would certainly be a partial demobilization following the defeat of Hitler. This would raise most difficult and intricate problems, and the Government were taking care in their arrangements to avoid the mistakes so freely committed after the last war.

On this assumption Mr. Churchill hoped that the United Nations, headed by the British Commonwealth, the United States and Russia, would immediately begin to confer upon the future world organization which is to be our future safeguard against further wars; and he foreshadowed the formation of a Council of Europe and a Council of Asia to embody or represent the United Nations, and, some day, all nations. It was upon the creation of the Council of Europe and the settlement of Europe that the first practical task would probably be centred. He hoped that we should not lightly cast aside all the immense work accomplished by the creation of the League of Nations. Certainly we must take as our foundation the lofty conception of freedom, law and morality which was the spirit of the League.

We must try to make the Council of Europe, or whatever it might be called, into a really effective League, with all the strongest forces concerned woven into its

texture ; with a High Court to adjust disputes ; and with armed forces, national or international or both, held ready to enforce these decisions and prevent renewed aggression and the preparation of future wars. This Council must eventually embrace the whole of Europe. As to the small nations it seemed to him that it might be possible and convenient to have

"a number of groupings of States or confederations which would express themselves through their own chosen representatives, the whole making a Council of great States and groups of States."

With regard to post-war policy at home the Prime Minister said he was much attracted to the idea that we should make and proclaim a Four Years' Plan, for the period of transition and reconstruction which would follow the downfall of Hitler. We had five-year Parliaments and a Four Years' Plan would give time for the preparation of a second plan. It would cover five or six large measures of a practical character which must all have been the subject of prolonged and careful preparation and which fitted together into a general scheme. He continued :

"When this Plan has been shaped it will have to be presented to the country either by a National Government formally representative, as this one is, of the three parties in the State, or by a National Government comprising the best men in all parties who are willing to serve. I cannot tell how these matters will settle themselves. But by 1944 our present Parliament will have lived nine years, and as soon as the defeat of Germany has removed the danger now at our throats, and the register can be compiled and other necessary arrangements made, a new House of Commons must be freely chosen by the whole electorate, including, of course, the armed Forces, wherever they may be. Thus, whoever is burdened with the responsibility of conducting affairs will have a clear policy and will be able to speak and act at least in the name of an effective and resolute majority."

The Prime Minister declared himself personally as being "very keen that a scheme for the amalgamation and extension of our present incomparable insurance system should have a leading place in our Four Years' Plan." He spoke of his own work in past years as lieutenant to Mr. Lloyd George, the prime parent of all national insurance schemes, and said that the time was now ripe for another great advance. He and his colleagues in the

Government must be ranked as "strong partisans of national compulsory insurance for all classes, for all purposes, from the cradle to the grave." Every preparation, including, if necessary, legislative preparation, would be made with the utmost energy ; and the necessary negotiations with existing worthy interests were being actively pursued.

The best way to ensure against unemployment was to have no unemployment ; and another point was that unemployables, rich or poor, would have to be toned up. We could not afford to have idle people, whether they came from the ancient aristocracy or the modern plutocracy or the ordinary type of pub-crawler. Of agriculture Mr. Churchill said that in the future we should certainly have to grow a larger proportion of our food at home ; and if the war-time expansion and improvement of our agriculture was to be maintained, as it must, and with prices at a reasonable level, there were likely to be substantial charges which the State must be prepared to shoulder. We must also establish on broad and solid foundations a National Health Service.

A sombre anxiety to those who looked some decades ahead was our dwindling birth-rate, and if Britain was to survive as a great Power our people must be encouraged by every means to have larger families. The future of the world was to the highly educated races, and he hoped that our education would become broader and more liberal to help in fitting the nation for its responsibilities and high duty. The facilities for advanced education must be evened out and multiplied and no one who could take advantage of a higher education should be denied this chance. Religion had been a rock in the life and character of the British people upon which they had built their hopes and cast their cares, and this fundamental element must never be taken from our schools. The secular schooling of the great mass of our scholars must be progressively prolonged ; and there must be part-time release of young people from industry both to carry on their general education and to obtain specialized education the better to fit them for their work. We must make sure that the path to the higher functions throughout our society and Empire was really open to the children of every family, through equality of educational opportunity.

One large, immediate task after the war, said Mr. Churchill, would be the replanning and rebuilding of our cities and towns. This would make a

great demand on our resources of material and labour ; but it would also provide an immense opportunity, both for the improvement of our housing and for the post-war employment of our people. Touching upon finance, he said that at the end of the war there would be seven or eight million people in this country with from £200 to £300 each in savings, a thing unknown in our history. These savings of the nation were sacred, and since it was the duty of the State to redeem its faith in an equal degree of value it would be necessary for ten or fifteen years after the war to maintain a steady continuity of values if there was to be any faith between the individual and the State. We had successfully stabilized prices during the war. The Government intended to continue this policy after the war to the utmost of their ability. Direct taxation on all classes stood at unprecedented and sterilizing levels and indirect taxation was also very heavy.

Such conditions could not continue in peace, and while we must expect taxation after the war to be heavier than it was before the war, the Government did not intend to shape their plans or levy taxation in a way which, by removing personal incentive, would destroy initiative and enterprise. It was necessary to make sure that private enterprise and State enterprise should both be able to play their parts to the utmost. While there was a broadening field for State ownership and enterprise, especially in relation to monopolies of all kinds, and the modern State would increasingly concern itself with the economic well-being of the nation, it was all the more vital to revive at the earliest moment a widespread, healthy and vigorous private enterprise, without which we should never be able to provide full employment for our people.

Having set forth both hopes and fears, Mr. Churchill proclaimed himself a faithful follower of the larger hope. He spoke of the inevitably great demand after the war for consumable goods, both for home and export ; of the stimulus to other industries which would be given by the great building programme ; of significant new industries offering scope for inventiveness and vigour ; and of the improvement of our industrial efficiency and productive capacity. It was his belief that if we acted with comradeship and loyalty to our country and to one another, and if we could make State enterprise and free enterprise both serve national interests and pull the national wagon side by side, then there was no need for us to run into that horrible, devastating slump or into that squalid epoch of bickering and confusion which mocked and squandered the hard-won victory which we gained a quarter of a century ago. In conclusion he asked that the country should get back to its job. There was a danger of it appearing to the world that we in Britain were diverting our attention to peace, which was still remote, while our Russian Allies were fighting for dear

life against all the might of the German military machine, and while our thoughts should be with our own armies and our American and French comrades now engaged in decisive battle in Tunisia. The Prime Minister's last words were to announce that a message from General Montgomery had informed him that the Eighth Army were again on the move and to wish God-speed to them.

This broadcast was well received. It had a salutary effect at a time when controversy about the Beveridge plan and other domestic issues had appeared to constitute a growing threat to national unity. It was felt that the Prime Minister had given a masterly and comprehensive survey of the problems to be confronted after the war and that his Four Years' Plan of reconstruction in the immediate post-war period was a satisfying and concrete proposal in which the social security scheme fell into proper perspective. The Labour Party, however, were much concerned about the implications of that passage in the speech in which Mr. Churchill had referred to the type of Government which would submit the Four Years' Plan to the country at a post-war general election.

The attitude of the rank and file of the Labour Party was that they could not at this stage be committed to a continuance of Coalition Government after the war; and that if they did consent to partake in the continuance of such a Government they could not consent to a general election on any basis which would not give their Party a free opportunity of increasing its representation in the House of Commons. They were emphatic from the first in declaring that if a stereotyping of existing party representation in the House for another Parliament, through a "coupon" election, was to be the price demanded of them for continuing a National Government they would not pay it. Their suspicions were also aroused by the Prime Minister's hint that there might be an alternative type of National Government comprising "the best men in all parties who are willing to serve." Did this, asked Labour men, mean that some of their leaders in the present Government might be disposed to join another Churchill Administration—perhaps a Centre Party Government—even although the Party decided on a different course?

A question put to the Prime Minister by Mr. Shinwell in the House on March 25 was clearly the outcome of these apprehensions. Mr. Shinwell asked whether the statement in the broadcast that there would be a Four Years' Plan after the war based on a Coalition Government represented the policy of the Government? In

other words, he wanted to know whether Mr. Attlee, Mr. Bevin and Mr. Herbert Morrison were bound by such an arrangement. Mr. Churchill answered: "The answer about the Four Years' Plan is in the affirmative, but whether it will be put forward by a Coalition Government or not depends on what the various parties decide to do."

The Labour Ministers also explained their position to their colleagues of the Parliamentary Labour Party. In a subsequent statement to the Party, Mr. Attlee said: "The question as to what will be the nature of the Government in the post-war period depends, as the Prime Minister stated on March 25, on what the various parties decide to do. Meanwhile the Labour Party, like other parties, is entirely uncommitted and remains free to take its own decision at the appropriate time. Labour Ministers are equally uncommitted. . . ." Mr. Herbert Morrison also let it be known that so far as he personally was concerned he would not serve in any Government except with the backing of the Labour Party. It later became evident from speeches made in the country that a big body of opinion in the Labour Party was opposed to any continued participation in the Coalition Government after the war.

In submitting the Army Estimates on February 25, Sir James Grigg, Secretary of State for War, was able to present some agreeable contrasts with the military situation in the early months and the summer of 1942. The immense resources of the United Nations, he said, had begun to assert themselves, and what had appeared to be the enemy's irresistible progress had been definitely halted and put into reverse. Having referred to Russia's defensive and offensive successes, he spoke of the British victory at Alamein, the Eighth Army's swift advance to Tripoli, and the Anglo-American occupation of French North Africa. The year which had passed had seen disaster turn into the beginnings of victory. It had produced in the Eighth Army the finest instrument of war ever fashioned in the history of the British Empire; and it had renewed on the field of battle that great union of American, British and French troops which first saw its expression in 1918.

Incidentally, Sir James Grigg referred to General Alexander's withdrawal of the British forces through Burma in 1942 as a great feat of arms which slowed down the Japanese advance and enabled Field-Marshal Wavell to organize the defences of India. Of the North-West Africa campaign he said that the preparations were begun as long ago as March, 1942, and were carried out throughout with the utmost secrecy. In the final phase of preparations, within a period of about three weeks, 185,000

men, 20,000 vehicles, and 220,000 tons of stores had all to be moved from billets and depots to ports in this country. This meant running 440 special troop trains, 680 special freight trains and 15,000 railway wagons by ordinary goods services, and the subsequent embarkation of these men and stores. The convoy containing the assault force was the largest that ever sailed from this country, and the almost complete surprise achieved in an operation of this magnitude reflected the greatest credit on all concerned. At every stage there had been the closest co-operation between the British and American forces.

Another major administrative achievement of the Army had been the building up of the Forces in Iraq and Persia and the development of communications between the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea to increase the flow of aid to Russia. At home we had re-housed a considerable part of our own Army in order to hand over to the incoming American troops hutments, billets, hospitals and storage space. In addition a large programme of new building had been necessary. To economize shipping space we were furnishing on demand to the American troops here everything that we could hand over—in the way of equipment, warlike stores, machinery and clothing—without seriously impeding the supplies of our own Armies. This was Lend-Lease in reverse and we had no reason to be ashamed of our ratio in these transactions.

To show the strain placed on our shipping resources by the maintenance of our forces all over the world, Sir James Grigg mentioned that during the past year 1,000,000 tons of stores had been sent round the Cape to various destinations, together with 500,000 men and 50,000 tanks, guns, or vehicles. He also spoke of the considerable reorganization of the Forces in Great Britain and of the intense training of the Field Army for an offensive role. The improved training and equipment of the Home Guard had made it possible to rely upon this force for the local defence of this country to a greater extent than ever before. Speaking of the increasing importance of the work of the women auxiliaries of the A.T.S., the Secretary for War mentioned that by June, 1943, more than 40 per cent of the total personnel of the Anti-Aircraft Command would be women. The latter part of the debate on the Estimates turned upon Army welfare and Education, a subject raised by Mr. David Grenfell, and Mr. Arthur Henderson, Financial Secretary to the War Office, gave an interesting account of the existing scope of such work and of proposed improvements.

When Mr. Alexander introduced the Navy Estimates on March 5 he described how in the preceding twelve months the Royal Navy and the Dominion Navies had passed through one of

"the most exacting and dangerous periods in the whole of our naval history." The struggle had been waged from the South-West Pacific to the Bay of Bengal, from the Persian Gulf to the Cape of Good Hope, in the Mediterranean, in the Atlantic, North and South, and in Arctic waters. In the last half of 1941 the U-boat threat had seemed under control, but the whole position was altered overnight by the entry of Japan into the war. Two great oceans were added at one stroke to the area in which our shipping was menaced by submarine and air attack. Naval strength on which we counted for escort work in the Atlantic had to be diverted to distant seas. The great flow of trade along the coasts of Central and North America was attacked by U-boats from this side of the Atlantic.

The losses in the Atlantic had been a "grievous drain" on the tonnage available to the United Nations. They sometimes amounted to three-quarters of the monthly total. With the adoption of the convoy system they had declined rapidly.¹ The Royal Navy and Dominion Navies had contrived "at some sacrifice of protection elsewhere" to give the United States considerable help in these waters. Corvettes under construction were earmarked for the U.S. Navy, and anti-submarine vessels and Coastal Command aeroplanes with crews experienced in anti-U-boat operations were sent to the threatened area.

"When the American coast offered them a diminishing return the U-boats appear to have pursued two main policies. First, they had concentrated on the mid-Atlantic area, where convoys were furthest from friendly air bases. Secondly, with the rest of their forces, their attack was extended as far over the main shipping routes as possible." Their packs sought to maintain themselves at sea by the use of supply ships and supply U-boats of great endurance. They had made sharp, and sometimes prolonged, raids on "the routes south of Freetown (Sierra Leone), around the Cape of Good Hope, the approaches to the Mozambique Channel, and the east coast of Brazil." There had also been incursions, "presumably by the Japanese," into the Gulf of Aden. In the Atlantic the Royal Canadian Navy, "now grown out of all recognition from its modest pre-war proportions," had come to our aid. Four Canadian escort groups and the Canadian corvettes of an American group had been bringing over some of our ocean convoys during the past year and had achieved some notable successes against the U-boats.

There was a steady increase in the aircraft allotted to trade protection. More than half the attacks estimated to have damaged or destroyed U-boats during the past year had been made by aircraft. The need for surface escorts was still pressing. The production of these craft had the highest priority. Great programmes were in hand in

¹ Cf. *The Tenth Quarter*, p. 20, and *The Eleventh Quarter*, pp. 22 and 23.

this country, Canada and the United States. Group training under good leadership was also required to meet such attacks, and the Western Approaches Command under Admiral Sir Max Horton was developing this training still further.

In the campaign against the U-boats, said the First Lord, we would continue to have "periods of serious losses," but from December 1 last to February 28 our tonnage losses had been much less than in the corresponding period of 1941-42, and the result was encouraging, especially when it was remembered that we had been competing with a larger number of U-boats and with the added burden of maintaining communications with North Africa. He added :

"I do not suggest that the U-boats will not increase. There is still probably a larger output of U-boats than the total numbers killed, but the gap is being reduced. Already I can say that the results . . . during the last four months have been easily the most encouraging of the war, and in the month of February just ended, from the number and nature of the attacks that we know have been carried out, we believe we achieved the best results against U-boats yet experienced."

The Home Fleet under Admiral Sir John Tovey had the primary function of protecting the country from invasion and preventing the enemy fleet from breaking up our sea communications. In addition it protected the supplies sent to Russia from this country and the United States. These Arctic operations had cost us 2 cruisers, 10 destroyers, 6 smaller warships and many merchantmen,¹ and the loss of many valuable lives. Farther south Malta had been sustained and relieved. The First Lord had much to say of our North African operations² and of their effect on the blockade of Europe. He then turned to the Fleet Air Arm, recounted its exploits and defended the Admiralty against the charge of being insufficiently air-minded. The Fleet Arm had been constantly expanding in spite of losses of aircraft-carriers and its expansion was rapidly increasing. He described the Seafire, "now coming forward in increasing

¹ Rumour assessed our loss in merchantmen in these operations at over seventy.

² q.v. Chapter II, Section 3.

numbers," as the best naval fighter in the world. As regards our new torpedo-bomber, the Barracuda, it was

"easy to criticize delays which had occurred . . . but it was necessary to remember the air production position when we were forced into war and . . . the even more perilous situation with which we were suddenly confronted . . . when France fell." In the autumn of 1940 the Government had to choose between proceeding with the development of the (re-designed) Barracuda or having more fighters for the defence of Britain. They chose to suspend work on the Barracudas for a short time and their decision was entirely justified. "The stage of such heart-breaking decisions was now past and Barracudas were being produced in increasing numbers."

The House was much impressed by the First Lord's disclosure that 900 warships from trawlers to capital ships had been built in British shipyards at home and overseas since the outbreak of war, apart from the extensive conversion of merchantmen into auxiliary warships.

Up to date 8,300 British and Allied merchant ships had been fitted with guns or with protective devices against attack by aircraft or submarines or both. A joint force of specially trained naval ratings and

soldiers of the Maritime Regiment of the Royal Artillery had been formed to man these guns, and now numbered nearly 33,000 men. The production of "that invaluable close-range anti-aircraft gun," the Oerlikon, had reached such dimensions that great numbers were available for the arming of merchantmen, and over 8,000 of these guns had been supplied and fitted to British and Allied ships during the past year.

We had built "large fleets of special landing craft, mosquito craft and mine-sweepers. Motor torpedo-boats and gunboats and similar vessels produced here, in the Empire and in the U.S.A., 'ran into several hundreds,' while the coastal mine-sweeping force had long since passed the thousand mark. Perhaps the most outstanding achievement was the construction of a corvette fleet which, in spite of losses, was over 200 strong. A new and faster type of craft with heavier armament, some of which were already in service, would be distinguished by the name of 'frigate.' A special drive was being made to increase the speed of construction still further, and here we had had magnificent assistance from Canada.¹ In spite of the requirements of the Navy and the enormous volume of repairs and conversions, our output of merchant tonnage had exceeded our target for 1942 by a creditable margin."

On March 11 Sir Archibald Sinclair, in submitting the Air Estimates, was able to give the House much highly encouraging information. He reported that our output of trained air crews was higher in 1942 than in 1941 and would continue to increase. We had been able to raise

¹ See also Chapter XII for this.

the standards and lengthen the training of air crews at a time when the enemy had been forced seriously to reduce the length of his training courses and to accept a lower standard of air crew efficiency. The fruits of our training were shown by the greater striking power of our Air Force, and especially of Bomber Command, and by the marked decline in the accident rate which was now 20 per cent less than what it had been this time last year. He then spoke most warmly of the assistance given us by the Dominions. The Joint Air Training Plan Agreement of 1939 had been extended until March, 1945. The new agreement provided for a further expansion of training facilities in Canada.

Besides undertaking responsibility for the administration and control of that plan Canada had provided a major proportion of the pupils and was bearing half the cost of the organization. The Canadian Government had recently announced their generous intention to take financial responsibility for the thirty-five R.C.A.F. squadrons formed or to be formed under the Agreement for service with the R.A.F. in this country or elsewhere. The Secretary of State also paid warm tribute to the Governments of Australia and New Zealand who had continued to send air crews to serve in this country in spite of the entry of Japan into the war. The great training organizations in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia were also turning out highly trained air crews in increasing numbers.

Speaking of the German attacks on Great Britain, Sir Archibald Sinclair said that

"It would be a great mistake" to suppose that the strength of the German striking force in Western Europe can be measured by the size of the raids attempted on this country. Throughout the past year a formidable bomber force had been maintained in Western Europe. The strength and soundness of our system of defence had been a deterrent to attack. In the three months ending on February 28, 1943, "of 392 aircraft which crossed our coasts by day, 46 were destroyed, in addition to a large number probably destroyed . . . while, in the same period of 240 aircraft which crossed our coasts by night 26 were destroyed in addition to 'probables' or damaged." During that period we had inflicted on the enemy engaged in the promiscuous raiding of our coastal towns a rate of casualties nearly three times as heavy as we had suffered in our discriminating day attacks on military objectives in Germany and occupied territory. The Secretary of State believed that the object of these attacks was to excite an agitation which would compel the Government to divert forces for the protection of coastal towns from offensive action against Germany. The Germans had once again under-estimated the fortitude of our people.

Public attention had naturally been arrested by the small scale so far of German reprisal raids against London following the attacks on Berlin. This was largely due to

German preoccupations in Africa and Russia, and to the effectiveness of our air defence. A third reason, sometimes overlooked, was the pulverizing offensive of Bomber Command which was compelling the enemy to switch a "not unimportant proportion" of his capacity from the production of bombers to that of defensive fighters.¹

Sir Archibald Sinclair gave an encouraging summary of the results of the attacks of the R.A.F. on Germany and its satellite or occupied countries, especially during recent months. Besides holding nearly half the German fighter force in Western Europe, the R.A.F., greatly assisted of late by American aircraft, had struck mighty blows at Axis heavy industry and communications. In Occupied France transport had been dislocated and the attacks on locomotives had filled French railway workshops to congestion. In the last four months of 1942 100 locomotives had been thus destroyed or damaged.

In spite of bad weather, the tonnage of bombs dropped in January this year was only surpassed three times in 1942. In February, with a delivery of over 10,000 tons of bombs, including three 1,000-ton raids, Bomber Command had dropped more than half as much again as in any previous month. In the first ten days of March over 4,000 tons had been dropped.

After his reference to the first March raid on Essen which has been mentioned already, the Minister said that large-scale destruction of German industrial centres had continued in other areas.

In Wilhelmshaven 118 acres had been devastated, including the arsenal which had been destroyed. In Rostock 130 acres, in Mainz 135 acres, in Lübeck 200 acres, in Stuttgart 260 acres, in Düsseldorf 380 acres and in Cologne 600 acres had been laid waste, and thousands of acres of industrial property had been devastated in other towns. In all, he reckoned, some 2,000 factories and industrial works had been destroyed or seriously damaged. Substantially more than a million people had been rendered homeless, not counting those evacuated for fear of attack whose influx had made Berlin and other cities and towns in eastern Germany "intolerably overcrowded." Direct damage to steel works in the Ruhr and the Saar had caused a loss of 1,250,000 tons of steel and the total loss must be greater than this. We knew that the daily output of coal in the Ruhr fell by

¹ It was believed in some well-informed quarters in the R.A.F. that, while the intention of the "sneak raids" on British coast towns was mainly to harass and dispirit the population, the Germans were also "trying out" young pilots who had just passed their tests and were "blooded" by sending them across the Channel on "hit-and-run" raids with orders to avoid defended military objectives and encounters with our fighter aircraft.

20 per cent in three months last summer and that later in 1942 coal exports to Sweden and to Italy were markedly diminished.

The heavy damage to the Phillips Radio Works at Eindhoven had resulted in a loss to the Axis of no small proportion of their total production of radio valves. These works also produced much specialized electrical equipment and maintained important research laboratories.

After describing the damage done to industrial plants in Italy (q.v. Chapter II, Section 3) the Minister said that the information which he had given the House was conservative. It was largely based on the interpretation of photographs taken, often in the face of opposition, by aircraft flying at great heights. These did not tell the whole story and the economic effect of our offensive was "undoubtedly greater than the sum of the individual items of destruction which we were able to assess."

Important passages in the speech dealt with the campaign against the U-boats. All the Home Commands were engaged in it, but it was the chief preoccupation of Coastal Command, which had expanded rapidly during the year, while its equipment had been strengthened by new weapons and "many strange contrivances."

Air cover was, he said, a major factor in defeating the U-boat. We were determined "so to improve it that we shall be able to say that there is no time by day or by night when air cover cannot be provided for the North Atlantic routes."

Part of the Secretary of State's speech was devoted to post-war civil aviation. The Government were fully alive to its importance and the War Cabinet had decided that the design of a limited number of civil aircraft should proceed with Government assistance, as and when it could be arranged. The Government were also giving close attention to the organization of civil air transport on the international plane after the war.

As to transport aircraft the Secretary of State said while we had been perforce dependent on the U.S.A. for these machines, we were now making them for ourselves and obtaining further promised supplies from America for urgent war needs. With these new aircraft we should be able to form new transport squadrons. Their operations throughout the world would have to be controlled, and he had therefore decided to establish a Royal Air Force Transport Command. In addition to controlling the operations of R.A.F. transport units at home the Command "would be responsible for the organization and control of strategic air routes, for all oversea ferry-

ing, and for the reinforcement moves of squadrons to and between overseas theatres. The Royal Air Force Ferry Command at Montreal would become a subordinate formation."

In the ensuing debate the House appeared in general well satisfied with the work of the Ministry during the past year. The attitude of some groups in the United States (q.v. Chapter I, Section 2) had aroused much interest in civil aviation and in the question of its post-war control, and Labour voices were raised in favour of the adoption of a policy of co-operation with the United States as well as with members of the British Commonwealth.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer on January 26 asked the Commons to authorize Votes of Credit of £1,900,000,000 for war expenditure, and he gave the information that total expenditure on the war had by then increased to the rate of about £14,000,000 a day, which was £1,250,000 a day more than it was four months before. The Chancellor also had much to say about post-war economic and financial policy when the House debated this subject on a motion submitted by Lord Winterton on February 2 and 3.

In an extensive review of the probable post-war outlook Sir Kingsley Wood expressed the opinion that while it would be foolish to believe that a great and cruel war could in itself bring better and happier days we could, on the whole, regard the economic shape of things to come with hope and good promise. None the less he pointed out that in spite of the inevitably great demand for goods and services after the war, there would be for some time a fundamental change in our economic position in that we should have to face a considerable adverse balance of international payments, a heavy loss of overseas investments and a serious position in relation to our export trade. Our basic object must be to provide active employment for our people and he stressed the fact that unless we could considerably expand our export trade our relatively high standard of living must inevitably fall. Inflation would be one of the greatest dangers to be guarded against after the war, and it would be necessary for a time to maintain a considerable measure of Government control of our economic life. He repeated and elaborated points made in the Prime Minister's broadcast about the part which private enterprise must continue to play in our productive industry after the war and about post-war taxation. He indicated various other ways in which Government action could contribute to post-war economic recovery; and, in particular, he looked forward to international action to bring about an orderly reduction of barriers to trade and a new international monetary mechanism to facilitate international trade transactions.

In February the Minister of Town and Country Planning Bill became law. This measure provided for

the appointment of a new Minister of Town and Country Planning for England and Wales—a post for which Mr. W. S. Morrison had been previously designated—the transfer to the new Minister of statutory planning powers formerly exercised by the Ministry of Works and Planning, and the appointment of certain Statutory Commissions to assist the new Minister. This appeared at last to establish an effective Central Planning Authority in accordance with the recommendations of the Uthwatt and Scott Reports. Another major Bill that occupied the attention of the Commons was the Hydro-Electric Development (Scotland) Bill, which was given an unopposed second reading on February 24.

Under this Bill it was proposed to set up a non-profit-earning public corporation to be responsible for the future development of water power resources for the generation of electricity over a great area of the North of Scotland. The corporation is to be backed by a Treasury guarantee for the raising of loans up to a maximum of £30,000,000 for capital development.

On February 23 the Select Committee of the House of Commons, under the chairmanship of Mr. Willink, which had been set up to consider the demand that women should be compensated at the same rates as men for civilian war injuries, reported in favour of such equal compensation. The report stated that the proposal “not only had justice on its side but could be adopted with little practical difficulty and at relatively little cost.”

On February 25 Mr. Bevin issued a White Paper giving details of an important scheme for the post-war training at Government expense of craftsmen for the building industry. The plan is based on the assumption that a post-war building programme extending over ten or twelve years will require the creation for the industry of a labour force of 1,250,000 men. The probable deficiency of skilled men in the industry after the war has been estimated at 275,000.

The Government plan will provide for the training of 200,000 men during the first three or four years of the programme. The greater part of the training will be given in this country, but the position of men in the Forces overseas will also be considered, especially if large forces have to be kept abroad after hostilities have ceased. Arrangements are also to be made to establish conditions of work which will, as far as possible, eliminate casual

employment in the building industry. All these arrangements are being made in consultation with the building trade employers and trade unions, and there will also be an apprenticeship training scheme to provide for the long-term needs of the industry.

In January the Commons had a secret debate on the man-power situation which lasted for two days. There was a debate later in that month on the report by the Select Committee on National Expenditure on the organization and control of the Civil Service. The Government's proposals for the reform of the Foreign Service, previously outlined in a White Paper, were debated in the Commons and formally approved—though not without some criticism and a small vote against—on March 18. They were similarly approved in the House of Lords after an interesting debate that lasted for two days. On March 17 the Commons heard from the Prime Minister a forthright declaration about the future of British Colonies. In the course of a reply to a question, he said :

“His Majesty's Government are convinced that the administration of the British Colonies must continue to be the sole responsibility of Great Britain. The policy of His Majesty's Government is to plan for the fullest possible political, economic and social development of the Colonies within the British Empire, and in close co-operation with neighbouring and friendly nations.”

On February 4 Mr. Eden expressed the thanks of the House of Commons to a Parliamentary delegation which had just returned from a goodwill mission to China. The members of this Mission were Lord Ailwyn, Lord Teviot, Mr. J. J. Lawson and Mr. Scrymgeour Wedderburn. On their way home the members of the Mission spent ten days in Turkey at the invitation of the Turkish Government. Mr. Lawson and Mr. Wedderburn acknowledged this compliment from the House and both spoke of the great hospitality with which they had been received by the Chinese Generalissimo and Government. Lord Ailwyn and Lord Teviot also spoke in acknowledgment of a similar expression of thanks conveyed to them in the House of Lords by Lord Cranborne and spokesmen of other parties.

On March 3 Captain the Hon. Edward Algernon

FitzRoy, Conservative Member for Daventry, who had been Speaker of the House of Commons since 1928, died in the Speaker's House at Westminster at the age of seventy-three. Parliament was sitting at the time, and both Houses immediately adjourned. Not since 1789 had a Speaker died during his term of office, and there was much searching of precedents as to the constitutional situation which had arisen. The House of Commons cannot function without a Speaker—since even the authority of the Deputy Speaker does not survive the Speaker's death—and this meant that until a new Speaker had been elected and formally approved by the King the whole machinery of Parliament virtually came to a standstill. Speaker FitzRoy died on Wednesday and the Commons adjourned until the following Tuesday. In the meantime his ashes were interred in the church of St. Margaret's, Westminster, the official place of worship of the House of Commons, in the presence of Ministers, members of both Houses of Parliament, members of the Diplomatic Corps and representatives of the Dominions and Colonies. When the Commons met on March 9, Colonel Douglas Clifton Brown, Conservative Member for Hexham, was unanimously elected Speaker, and the King's approval of the House's choice was signified by Lords Commissioners in the House of Lords the same day. Colonel Clifton Brown, who was elected Speaker at the age of sixty-three, had been a member of the House with one short break since 1918 and he had previously been Chairman of Committees and Deputy Speaker. He had been appointed to that post earlier in the year on the resignation of Sir Dennis Herbert, M.P., who was later raised to the peerage as Lord Hemingford. He is a man well liked by members of all parties and his appointment to the Chair was generally welcomed. The House elected as its new Chairman of Committees Major James Milner, Labour Member for South-East Leeds ; with Mr. Charles Williams, Conservative Member for Torquay, as Deputy Chairman.

On March 10 the House of Commons formally recorded in a resolution its sense of loss at the death of Speaker FitzRoy, who was described as

having "fulfilled the duties of his high office both in peace and war with ability, authority and impartiality." The House also resolved on an Address to the King, praying that some signal mark of the Royal favour should be conferred on the family of Captain FitzRoy for his eminent services as Speaker.

Mrs. FitzRoy was later given the dignity of the widow of a Viscount and became Viscountess Daventry.

An agreeable incident in the House on January 19 was a speech of congratulation by Mr. Eden to Mr. Lloyd George on his eightieth birthday.

In addition to those already referred to there were many other debates of high quality on important topics in the House of Lords. Several of these were on motions by Lord Beaverbrook, who greatly enlivened the proceedings by his vigorous and original contributions to debates on such subjects as the opening of "a second Front" and aid to Russia. The House had secret debates on the U-boat war and aircraft production. There were also public debates on civil aviation, aid for China, the equipment of the Fleet Air Arm and agriculture. Two vacancies in the Ministry which existed at the beginning of the year were filled by peers. The Duke of Devonshire, formerly Under-Secretary at the India Office, was appointed Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies; and the Earl of Munster was appointed Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for India and Burma.

NOTE.—A reference to the India debate of March 30 will be found in Chapter XIII. Late in March the taking over of Shortt Brothers by the Ministry of Aircraft Production and the resignation of the Chairman and members of the British Overseas Airways Corporation aroused Parliamentary questions and discussions which will be referred to in the next volume.

CHAPTER X

LABOUR, FUEL, FOOD

As the Allies passed from the defensive to the offensive the character of our war production changed. The stocks of certain types of war material were now so large that their production could be safely reduced and man-power and raw materials could be released for transfer to other work which was increasing in importance. During the first three months of the year our industrial production neared its peak, and although less hands were employed than in the United States, there was reason to believe that our output per worker exceeded the American average.

On January 19 Mr. Lyttelton, in a statement to Parliament, outlined plans for the extensive transfer of labour during 1943, which would be "a peak year" in production. Our plans, he said, demanded that increased emphasis should be placed on "the manufacture of ships, of aircraft, of anti-U-boat devices, of tanks, and of certain specialized types of Army equipment." He wished managers and workmen who were or would be affected by the change of programme to realize that whatever dislocation they might cause temporarily, these changes were "part of an ordered plan." Men and women transferred to new work should understand that this was because the new work had "become even more vitally important than that upon which they were previously engaged." He appealed to M.P.s to help the Minister of Labour and National Service "in his difficult task by explaining to their work-people why these changes are necessary."

After Parliament had discussed man-power in secret session Mr. Bevin announced further measures for directing women into industry. On January 28 he told the House of Commons that the Employment of Women (Control of Engagement) Order was being amended so as to include women of from eighteen to forty years of age.

The higher age had previously been thirty. The Amending Order would come into force on February 22.

The Minister also announced that a new Order would require notification to an employment exchange when a man or woman left employment. Wider use would also be made of the Minister's power of directing persons, under Defence Regulation 58A, to non-scheduled work, including part-time work. It was explained that women who had children under fourteen living with them and all employed in agriculture, teaching and nursing

would be exempted. The Ministry was now in a position to order married women without young children in their charge to undertake specified work within reasonable distance of their homes. On February 8 Mr. Bevin, in a written reply to a Parliamentary question, said that the total number of women between eighteen and forty-five years of age who had registered was 8,670,000.

The increasing employment of women and young people for long hours and often at some distance from their homes was unquestionably a factor, and probably the chief factor in the increase of illness and overstrain to which a number of authorities drew attention. Among them may be mentioned the committee on Wage-earning Children which re-issued its report on Industrial Protection of Youth

"because of its concern at the results of registration which have shown the existence of overstrain among many boys and girls aged sixteen to eighteen who are working abnormal hours and are unable therefore to join any organization." Long hours, the committee said, were not always due to the demands of war industry, but were at times the result of infringements of the Young Persons Employment Act, 1938, "which is undoubtedly difficult to administer." In an introduction to a report on war-time hours of work written by Dr. H. M. Vernon for the British Association for Labour Legislation, Miss Megan Lloyd George, M.P., pointed out that while women could do heavy and strenuous work under satisfactory conditions, conditions were by no means always satisfactory. Hours in excess of fifty-five a week combined with travelling time, frequent housework and fire-guard duties caused an "overloading" that must lead often to a dangerous degree of physical and mental exhaustion. This often led to a woman being lost to industry through a break-down or "to a serious increase in absenteeism . . . or a permanent injury to health," as the increase of tuberculosis showed.

On March 11 Mr. Bevin announced the appointment of an Industrial Health Advisory Committee and the holding in April of a three-day conference on industrial health to which representatives of the Dominions were invited. At the end of February the Government had advised industry that for the maintenance of health and efficiency workers should take their usual summer holidays this year provided that they did not exceed a week in length and that the Saturdays before the Easter, Whitsuntide and August Bank holidays should be approved holidays as well as the Monday after Christmas Day.

Thanks to a mild winter after the New Year and the economy exercised by domestic consumers of coal, gas ^{Fuel}

and electricity, the "Battle for Fuel" was won. Nevertheless the output of saleable coal in January was disappointing and in that month as in February only three districts earned output bonus. Absenteeism of the avoidable sort was still too frequent in some areas.

On January 22 a delegate conference of the Mineworkers' Federation learned that the colliery owners and the miners' representatives had agreed "on a complete system of conciliation to cover even the smallest difference that may occur at a single pit and the largest issue of wages affecting the whole industry."¹ The agreement itself did not define what were to be regarded as district questions to be settled by district machinery and what were national questions to be settled on a national basis. But it provided that should there be a difference of opinion on such a point the independent chairman or board appointed in accordance with the recommendations of the Government White Paper on Coal, issued in June, 1942, should give a ruling. The delegates approved the agreement which was then submitted to the districts.

The rationalization of retail deliveries of food, excluding milk and bread, resulted in the laying up of 34,000 vehicles and the consequent saving of petrol to an extent estimated at 25,000,000 gallons a year. There was a marked saving of petrol in other directions, and there was reason to believe that the armed forces had not been so lavish in their consumption of fuel in the winter of 1942-43 as they had been a year previously.

Food Speaking to the Press on January 12, Lord Woolton hinted that if the nation were not more economical in the consumption of *bread*, rationing might become necessary. He had a scheme for introducing it, although he did not want to introduce it.

He said that half our seamen were engaged in importing food to Great Britain and that half of that food was wheat. He wished to free shipping as far as possible from the burden of carrying wheat in order to release ships and crews for the transport of troops and munitions. He urged the public to eat more potatoes which were not imported from overseas, and he criticized the catering trade for not making more use of potatoes. The bakers and confectioners had taken leaves out of the Scottish and Irish books and were making confections containing potato flour "more widely available than ever before." The Food Ministry announced on January 17 that a complete census of bread production and consumption would be made under the Bread (Control and Maximum Prices) Order which came into force that day as a preliminary to rationing. The Army was to eat more potatoes and less bread.

¹ The Labour correspondent of *The Times*, *loc. cit.* January 23.

On January 15 it was announced that important changes to the advantage of children would be made in the national *milk, dried milk, cod-liver oil and fruit juice* schemes which would come into force on February 7.

On that date all holders of a child's ration book were automatically entitled to a priority supply of one pint of milk daily at 2d. per pint, with regular supplies of cod-liver oil and fruit juice. Hitherto these privileges had come to an end when a child reached the age of five. Henceforward it would be permissible for a child to continue this rationing until the issue of new ration books in July. The new ration books would contain coupons for cod-liver oil and fruit juice. On March 14 the weekly allowance of liquid milk to non-priority customers was increased to two and a half pints. The pasteurization of milk, which many doctors urged should be made compulsory to prevent the conveyance of milk-borne infections, was the subject of much correspondence in the Press during March.

Tinned meat products were standardized as from February 27 and small quantities of dried beef and mutton began to arrive from overseas. It was announced on March 31 that the statutory adult *meat* ration for the next month should include 2d. worth, i.e. one-seventh of the total value, of corned meat as a temporary precaution against later scarcity. News that the Ministry of Agriculture was again encouraging the gassing of wild *rabbits* aroused protests from housewives who valued rabbit meat and did not relish the idea of eating gassed rabbits, although their flesh was alleged to be eatable.¹

On March 30 Mr. Mabane, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food, said that the profits earned by trawler owners during the winter had proved sufficient to permit a reduction of the prices paid them. *Fish* wholesale and retail prices would consequently be reduced. Mr. Mabane said that opportunity had been taken to deal with "undesirable practices" in the trade, such as the sending to fishmongers as part of their entitlement under the distribution scheme such fish, "if they can be so called," as fish heads and skeletons, squids and sharks! The zonal distribution scheme would be modified during the summer. Mr. A. T. Dobson, Fisheries Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, said that the *eel*, or rather "elver" (i.e. young eel) industry on the Severn controlled by the Germans in pre-war days had been taken over by the Government, and a million elvers had been ordered to stock British rivers in 1943.

Shell *eggs* reappeared in the shops in January and most priority customers received three weekly and registered customers one each by the end of the month. The next allocations were at the same rate. The *cheese* ration was reduced from January 10 to 12 oz. for special classes, e.g. miners and

¹ And how were the dead rabbits to be extracted from deep burrows by labourers who had other important jobs to do?

agricultural labourers, and to 6 oz. for others. The price of *tea* was increased by 4d. a pound, wholesale price, on January 17 and retail price on January 24.

On February 8 Mr. Hudson launched a new campaign to encourage the production of *vegetables*. He urged their better cooking and less emphasis by small growers on potatoes and more on green vegetables. A fair quantity of tinned fruit, mostly home-produced, became available in February. The points cost of home-grown *tinned fruit* was six for smaller tins and nine for larger. That of imported fruit was six for tins weighing about 16 oz. and 12 for tins of about 29 oz.

CHAPTER XI

STATE FINANCE

The following sums were subscribed and invested during the quarter : (a) in War Bonds, 1949-51 and 1951-53, and in Savings Bonds, 1960-70, Series "A" and loans free of interest, and (b) in National Savings Certificates, Defence Bonds and deposits in the Post Office and Trustee Savings Banks :

<i>Week Ending</i>		(a)	(b)
January	5	£12,433,230	£ 9,118,176
"	12	£25,071,928	£17,246,063
"	19	£14,432,907	£17,634,555
"	26	£19,375,691	£15,554,930
February	2	£17,367,971	£15,492,796
"	9	£15,303,967	£16,367,361
"	16	£19,739,035	£15,526,831
"	23	£15,500,263	£14,560,456
March	2	£21,800,814	£13,342,633
"	9	£78,254,845	£18,021,523
"	16	£72,231,935	£20,050,561
"	23	£19,648,918	£14,003,906
"	30	£19,634,520	£12,878,802

It will be seen that the figures for "small savings" were generally higher than those for the same weeks last year. The high figures of "large savings" for the second and third weeks of March were due to the holding of a "Wings for Victory" week in London.

The week began on March 8 with a procession of the services, military and civil, through the City, and by noon on the first day the Lord Mayor announced that the receipts had exceeded £44,000,000. Public interest in and support of the week was maintained from first to last. The target, £150,000,000, was comfortably passed on the last morning of the week and the total raised was officially stated to amount to £162,015,869, nearly thirteen millions more than the amount raised in the London Warships' Week in 1942. Every London area exceeded its target. Manchester opened its "Wings for

Victory" week on March 20 with a target of £11,000,000 and raised £13,542,317. Chester, with a target of £500,000, raised £695,423.

The national accounts for the financial year closed on March 31. The final figures were :

Ordinary expenditure	£5,637,367,000
Ordinary revenue	£2,810,851, 000
	<hr/>
Deficit	£2,817,516,000
	<hr/>

The Chancellor of the Exchequer had originally estimated the year's expenditure in his Budget Speech at £5,286,479,000, but this estimate was afterwards increased to £5,707,505,000. The actual figure, therefore, fell short of the revised figure by £70,138,000.

Ordinary Revenue, including a Canadian contribution of £224,719,000, had been estimated at £2,627,100,000. It was, therefore, exceeded by £192,751,000. Over £1,000,000,000 had been raised by income-tax and most of the other taxes contributed to increase of revenue.

CHAPTER XII

THE DOMINIONS

Life in Eire grew more "austere" under controls and rationings. On March 2 restrictions, less severe than those imposed in Britain, were put on clothing. They involved the abolition of double-breasted jackets and the reduction of the number of pockets in male apparel. Smocks and aprons might not be made of cotton, and nurses had to wear caps and aprons of the nursemaid style instead of flowing headdresses and full aprons. On February 18 Mr. de Valera made it known in the Dail that in the absence of any international developments affecting the safety of the country, a general election would be held in June when the life of the present Dail expired. He rejected a suggestion of a National or Coalition Government.

It was announced in Dublin on March 26 that as a result of a request made by the Eire Government to the Spanish authorities, representatives of the Irish Red Cross Society would visit Spain to arrange for the distribution of Irish supplies to refugees there.

There were signs of restiveness among back-benchers of the permanent Unionist majority in the Parliament of Northern Ireland. A meeting in which thirteen of them took part during the second week-end of January was understood to have been concerned with the desirability of Ministerial changes of which there had been few indeed since 1922. On January 19 the Northern Ireland Unionist Parliamentary met and unanimously passed a resolution to the effect that the present was not an opportune time for discussing the Administration, that the subject required careful and deliberate consideration and that the Prime Minister (Mr. J. M. Andrews) "should not be asked to make a further statement on the matter until a Party meeting is convened by him for that purpose."

Two important bye-elections were held in County Antrim and West Belfast. In the first the Unionist candidate was returned by a great majority. In West Belfast on February 11 Labour defeated the Unionist candidate by more than 5,500 votes. This was the third bye-election which the Unionists had lost. On March 2 the Prime Minister issued a statement to the effect that reports of the existence of disunity in the Cabinet were untrue and that in the opinion of the Cabinet the circulation of such reports must inevitably damage the prestige of Northern Ireland

"and . . . unsettle our loyal people at a time when unity and concentration in the war effort are essential."

On January 15 Hugh McAteer, described as the Chief of Staff of the I.R.A., who had been sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment on a conviction for treason felony, and three other members of the I.R.A., escaped from Belfast prison. No light was thrown officially on the circumstances of their escape. On March 20 no less than twenty-one I.R.A. men interned in Londonderry gaol made their escape through a tunnel which they dug to a distance of 100 feet to the cellar of a neighbouring house. From this they reached a waiting furniture van and drove off across the Eire border. There eleven of them were surrounded by Eire troops and police and surrendered, to be sent to an internment camp in Kildare.

**Newfound-
land**

The arrival in England of a further contingent of volunteers from Newfoundland was recorded on March 29.

The Finance Commissioner's announcement of an increase in Income-tax and Excess Profits tax, retroactive to 1942, aroused general indignation. The Press was particularly severe on these increases and the *Evening Telegram* warned an "unrepresentative Government" to act cautiously in exercising their powers of taxation.

Canada

The Dominion Parliament met at Ottawa on January 28. In his Speech from the Throne Lord Athlone outlined the Government's programme. The Government would continue the expansion of the Navy; their army policy would include the maintenance and the reinforcement of the overseas troops and the maintenance

of the forces required for the defence of the coasts and of certain strategic areas. The air force would continue to share in overseas warfare, to develop the air training scheme at home and to maintain and expand its coastal patrolling. The Government intended to establish a War Supplies Allocation Board.

This body would provide for the financing and allocation to the United Nations of Canadian war production. A Select Committee of the Dominion House of Commons would be appointed to study a comprehensive scheme of social insurance, including health insurance on a national scale.

In his speech on February 1 Mr. Mackenzie King, in reply to a criticism that the Canadian Government had not been invited to attend the Casablanca Conference, said that Canada could not expect to receive an invitation which had not been extended to other British Dominions. Confidence must be placed in those at the head of the war effort of the United Nations and the President of the United States of America and the British Prime Minister were recognized as two men "around whom all can rally in support of any policy concerning which they may give the final word." Their decisions were not reached suddenly. They were the result of discussions and consultations in which the Canadian representatives took part in London and in Washington.

On February 2 Mr. King replied in Parliament to criticisms of his Government's war policy and at the same time reviewed the expansion of the Canadian armed forces.

He said that the Canadian Army in Great Britain was ready to form the spearhead of an attack on the Continent and shipping was the only limit of the country's war effort. The three Canadian air squadrons sent overseas in 1939-40 as complete units were in no way connected with the joint air-training plan agreement. These three original squadrons had been maintained completely from the outset by the Canadian Government in respect of pay, allowances and equipment. Under the new agreement of June 5, 1942, the number of squadrons allotted to the R.C.A.F. overseas was raised to 35, making a grand total of 38. The Government had decided to take over the responsibility for pay and allowances of all R.C.A.F. personnel serving overseas whether attached to the R.A.F. or in the R.C.A.F. squadrons, together with the cost, equipment and maintenance of all 38 squadrons.

In reply to Mr. Graydon, the Conservative leader, who had urged the formation of an Imperial War Cabinet, Mr. King said that there was now as perfect a system of communication and consultation between the different parts of the Empire as it was possible to have; instead of a single War Council in London they had a collective Cabinet—"a continuing conference between the Cabinets of the British Empire." He met the charge that the Government had muddled their man-power policy by the statement that the country's war production was, in proportion to its population, greater than that of any other country.

The war production of the Dominion had, indeed, been remarkable. On February 5 it was made known in

Ottawa that during 1942 the total Canadian production supplied to the Allies was valued at approximately £350,000,000, and that in volume the amount required by the Canadian forces had been trebled. The Canadian munitions output was roughly distributed as follows : 50 per cent to the United Kingdom, British fighting areas and to Russia, 30 per cent to the Canadian forces, and 20 per cent to the United States, China and Australasia. The Canadian High Commissioner in London had already been informed that mineral production in the Dominion during 1942 had reached a total value of \$564,200,000, an all-time high record. The increase in the output of "strategic" metals, e.g. cobalt, antimony, tungsten, tin and molybdenite had been very marked. At the end of January it was announced that the great hydro-electric power plant on the Saguenay River in Quebec Province would be completed in November, a year in advance of schedule. The plant would provide power for the manufacture of aluminium and its eventual capacity was estimated at 1,500,000 h.p.

On February 8 the Finance Minister, Mr. J. L. Ilsley, said that Canada would share her production of essential war supplies with the other United Nations on the basis of strategic needs without financial considerations. The Government were taking over the ownership of all United Kingdom interests in Canadian war plants. The British Government, who had provided over \$200,000,000 for the construction and equipment of factories in Canada to produce munitions for the British forces, would be reimbursed and would thus obtain cash to meet their immediate deficit in Canadian dollars.

The main Government estimates for 1943-44 were tabled in the House of Commons on February 25. They amounted to about \$610,580,000 (£135,000,900) compared to \$565,563,000 for the current year. These estimates were exclusive of all war appropriations. The increase was chiefly due to the increase of interest on the public debt. Mr. Ilsley introduced the Budget on March 3. Its main feature was a proposal to place the income-tax system in Canada on a "pay as you earn"

basis. Half the tax liability from the earned income of individuals (but not of corporations) and incomes from investment up to \$3,000 for 1942 was to be forgiven. Of the balance one-third was to be paid by June 30 and two-thirds by December 31, 1943. Farmers were given special consideration. Should a farmer suffer loss in any given year he might deduct the amount from the income he received in either of the next two years.

The total increase of revenue would be about \$136,000,000. The revenues for the coming year were expected to reach \$2,752,000,000, so that with a total expenditure of \$5,500,000,000 there would be a deficit of \$2,748,000,000. This would be covered by borrowing. Next day Mr. Ilsley told the Commons that the aggregate expenditures of the three defence services were estimated at \$3,320,000,000 (£737, 800,000) against the equivalent of £425,000,000 in the current year. The Government's total appropriation for war expenses would be \$3,890,000,000 (£864,450,000).

A social security plan estimated to cost about \$1,000,000,000 a year (£225,000,000) was submitted to a newly appointed Parliamentary Committee on social insurance on March 17. The plan aimed at securing a basic minimum income for every Canadian irrespective of occupation, age or sex. Drafts of National Health Insurance Bills for the Dominion were also placed before the special committee on March 16 by the Minister of Pensions, Mr. Ian Mackenzie.

On March 19 Mr. C. D. Howe, Minister of Munitions, stated that reserves of munitions and other war supplies were being built up in Canada to meet emergency demands from fighting zones in different parts of the world. He said

"Canada's war production has now reached a stage where we can afford to store adequate reserves in various parts of Canada as part of a planned supply strategy."

For Mr. Eden's visit to Ottawa, where he arrived on March 30 from Washington, the reader is referred to the first chapter of this volume.

From all accounts the stabilization of prices and wages inaugurated in New Zealand in December had had the desired effect of averting the danger of inflation. Early

in February Mr. Fraser said that the War Expenditure of the Dominion to the end of 1942 had totalled £174,643,000. Nearly half this sum had been raised by taxation, in conformity with the principle of avoiding a heavy burden of debt at the close of the war. Loans raised in the Dominion had totalled £83,440,000. Gross borrowings in the United Kingdom under the agreement for meeting New Zealand's overseas war expenditure amounted to £20,221,000, but £11,413,000 had been paid off or converted into securities in New Zealand and provision was made to meet the outstanding balance.

The new session of Parliament opened on February 24.

The Governor-General, Sir Cyril Newall, said that in view of the marked improvement that had taken place in the Pacific and the necessity of maintaining essential war production proposals would be laid before Parliament for some readjustment of local defence measures. He spoke highly of the United States forces in the Dominion "whose relations with our own people are most cordial and whose exemplary behaviour has earned our warmest admiration." At the opening of the session Mr. Fraser gave notice of a motion that the life of the present Parliament should be terminated on November 1, 1943. An election would normally have been held at the end of 1941. Under the existing law passed after the formation of the short-lived Joint War Cabinet in June, 1942, its life had been extended for the duration of the war and for a period thereafter not exceeding a year. The motion was approved by the House of Representatives on February 25.

There was an unpleasant incident at a prisoners-of-war camp on the same day. Japanese prisoners rioted and attacked the guard. Two officers and five guards were injured, one fatally. The guard fired and killed or mortally wounded forty-eight prisoners. Mr. Fraser said that the prisoners had refused to obey the legitimate orders of the camp authorities. An inquiry had begun and the representative of the protecting Power and the delegate of the International Red Cross Committee were immediately informed. They had since visited the camp and had reported that conditions there were normal and that the wounded were receiving all possible attention. The Japanese Government none the less broadcast threats of reprisals and, without apparently knowing what orders had been given to the prisoners, said that Japanese soldiers were accustomed to obey reasonable commands and that therefore the orders given them on this occasion must have been "degrading in character." Later Tokyo announced that

the Swiss Government had been asked to make an official investigation.

Mr. F. Jones, Defence Minister, and Mr. J. G. Coates, Minister of the Armed Forces, visited New Zealand troops stationed in the South-west Pacific area and conferred with the American military authorities there. Mr. Jones then went to the Middle East where he visited a number of New Zealand units after which he continued his journey to England. On February 26 Mr. Knox, the U.S. Secretary of the Navy, had disclosed that talks were proceeding with New Zealand about an air base in the Pacific. The base was on the island of Upolu in the Samoa group. On March 5 Mr. Sol Bloom, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives, challenged a statement made by a Republican member of the House recently to the effect that New Zealand had built 105 airfields out of Lend-Lease funds supplied by the United States and that the United States would have no right to use them after the war.

He said the facts were : (1) that only six new airfields had been constructed in New Zealand since the outbreak of war in 1939 ; (2) that the figure of 105 represented the number of airfields already in existence then ; (3) that all these airfields had been built out of New Zealand funds. Some had been made available to American troops but no charge had been made for them. New Zealand had constructed airfields for U.S. troops on islands of the Pacific outside the orbit of New Zealand administration. New Zealand had provided the funds and the airfields were made available to U.S. forces under "reverse Lend-Lease."

Major C. F. Skinner, an officer serving with the New Zealand Division in the Middle East, was unanimously recommended by the Labour Caucus for the vacancy in the Cabinet caused by resignation of Mr. Langstone, Minister of Lands. On February 28 it was announced that the Dominion Government had appointed Mr. C. A. Berendson, Secretary for External Affairs, to be the first New Zealand High Commissioner in Australia.

Beyond the day-to-day progress of the war several **Australia** topics engaged public attention and discussion in Australia during the quarter. These were the problem of the further expansion of man-power, the Militia Service Bill, the opening of the Third Liberty Loan, the temporary deadlock between the two Houses of Parliament over the Welfare Bill, and last, but not least, the return of the famous Ninth Division from the Middle East. On January 7 Mr. Curtin stated in Melbourne that before the

war over half-a-million people were employed in manufacturing civilian goods. The number had now shrunk to less than 200,000 out of a total of some 700,000 factory workers, whereas there were 500,000 people engaged in war-work. Protected industries were being combed of single men up to 45 and married men up to 35. On January 18 he drew a somewhat gloomy picture of the situation from the standpoint of man-power.

At the end of June, he said, the requirements for war commitments would be 150,000 units short, at the present rate of intake. The known extra requirements from January to June were 210,000, viz.: 146,000 men and 64,000 women. The man-power committee had reached the conclusion that while the monthly requirements for the first half of the year would be 24,000 men and 11,000 women, not more than 10,000 persons were likely to be provided each month. It was not thought practicable to meet all needs by the end of June because the nearer Australia drew to the bottom of the man-power pool the more difficult it became to transfer workers to the jobs where they would be most useful.

Mr. Curtin emphasized that in any case the strength of the fighting forces would be maintained. The production of arms and munitions of war had reached a point at which the whole labour force (having regard to the demands of the fighting forces) had been completely mobilized.

On January 21 the Commonwealth Prime Minister returned to the subject. The country, he said, had reached a stage where it was no longer possible to undertake new commitments without subtracting from something else. Thus far man-power problems had been dealt with as satisfactorily in Australia as anywhere, but the Government wished to set up one comprehensive authority to direct the flow of man-power. At present the Director-General of the Man-power Department, the War Organization of Industry, the Allied Works Council, the Stevedoring Council and the Medical Council all had authority over man-power in their various fields. Moreover the directive powers of the Director-General did not permit him to use the labour of those not gainfully employed and not registered as unemployed or to direct a person engaged in one class of work into another class.

On January 27 the Cabinet decided to concentrate the control of man-power to a body to be known as the War Commitments Committee. It would consist of the following persons :

The Director-General of Man-power, the First Naval Member, the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Land Forces, the Chief of the Air Staff, or his deputy, the Director-General of the War Organization of Industry, the Director-General of the Allied Works Council, the Director-General of Munitions and Aircraft Production and the chairman of the Standing Committee of the Allied Supply Council.

The Militia Bill was introduced by Mr. Curtin in the House of Representatives on January 29. The Bill

amended the Defence Act to enable the Militia to be employed on active service beyond the Commonwealth and its dependencies. Mr. Curtin had asked for and obtained his Party's consent to a Bill authorizing the employment of the Militia "in such other territories in the South-West Pacific area as the Governor-General proclaims as being territories associated with the defence of Australia." But when the Bill was presented to Parliament it defined the area in question in such narrow terms as "to make it hard to understand why Mr. Curtin thought it worth while to challenge the isolationists and the die-hard anti-conscriptionists in his party to obtain so little."¹ The definition excluded the Philippines, Malaya, Sumatra, parts of Java, Borneo, Celebes, all Japanese-occupied territory north of Rabaul, New Caledonia, the New Hebrides, and New Zealand. It included New Guinea, New Britain, New Ireland, Timor and a few of the northern Solomon Islands.

The logical consequences of this curious definition of the South-West Pacific area were disconcerting. Australian militiamen might land on the eastern end of Java, but they could not legally advance upon Batavia. U.S. conscripts had landed in Australia to aid the Australian militia, but the Commonwealth Government might not send their conscript militia to recover the Philippines. The Bill encountered protests from every quarter. The Americans were none too pleased by it. The British Press was critical. Mr. Curtin's defence of the measure based upon the contention that the militiamen would not in fact be needed or could not be spared outside the restricted zone was unconvincing. But the attitude of the Parliamentary Opposition was strangely negative. Their executive unanimously decided that no good purpose would be served by supporting any amendment to the Bill. Only Mr. Cameron, a former leader of the Country Party, proposed an amendment and it was defeated by fifty-six votes to thirteen on February 11. The Bill was finally passed by the Lower House without amendment on February 12. There was more opposition in the

¹ *The Times*, February 4.

Senate where Senator McLeay moved a Bill amending the National Security Act by deleting the proviso against the issue of regulations making the Militia liable to service outside Australia. This Bill was passed as was Mr. Curtin's Militia Bill on February 18.

The McLeay Bill then came before the Lower House and was defeated at the motion for its first reading by thirty-four votes to twenty-nine. It was a poor ending to the controversy in which the Opposition had cut as poor a figure as the Ministerialists. Perhaps a poorer, for opposition to conscription for service abroad had been "one of the most cherished articles in the Labour Creed,"¹ and Labour had made a limited concession, while its opponents were generally actuated by motives of political expediency—in short, they feared an election. On the other hand, the vast majority of Australians had no reason to be ashamed of their contribution to the war effort. No less than 700,000 of them were under arms and almost the entire man-power of the Commonwealth had been diverted to the fighting forces, to war work or to the essential industries.

On March 2 Mr. Curtin announced that the new war loan of £A100,000,000 would be called the "Third Liberty Loan." Its conditions resembled those of recent war loans, five-year bonds carrying 2½ per cent interest and sixteen-year bonds at 3½ per cent. The loan would open on March 16 and close on April 20. Mr. Curtin described it as the greatest challenge yet issued in Australia. There had been earlier loans of similar magnitude, but never yet had so much new money been sought.

Discussing Lend-Lease operations on March 3, Mr. Chifley said that Australia was spending £A55,000,000 in reverse Lend-Lease in goods and services for American troops during the financial year. Her total reciprocal Lend-Lease expenditure until December 31 was £A27,545,000, and her total estimated expenditure up to the close of the current financial year was estimated at £A461,000,000.

On the same day Mr. Beasley, Minister for Shipping, said that Australia had accepted responsibility for feeding the American troops in the south-west Pacific area and in the southern (New Zealand) area as well. He had authorized the production of dry provisions for Americans, under a one-year programme, valued at £A16,000,000. America would supply Australia with seed, agricultural implements and canning machinery to carry out the programme. On the following day the Cabinet approved the provision of vegetable dehydration plants, which would all be ready in two

¹ *The Times*, February 27. Its correspondent in Canberra observed on the same day that Mr. Curtin had pointed out that the Opposition Parties had been in office for twenty-two years in the last twenty-five, but had deliberately allowed the Defence Act to remain unchallenged.

months. Mutton dehydrating plants were working and the full programme provided for fourteen.

On March 12 a conflict arose between the Senate and the House of Representatives over the Senate's request to the Government to delete from the Bill imposing a higher income tax a proviso making the proclamation of this measure contingent on the passage of the National Welfare Bill. This Bill established a Trust Fund, to be raised by £A30,000,000 new taxation annually, for a scheme of social welfare to be brought into full operation after the war. The Bill was comprehensive.

It would provide for sickness, unemployment, insurance, child and maternal benefit, old-age and invalid pensions, and extended hospital services, all of these on a non-contributory basis. The Opposition maintained that the money devoted to it should be spent on the war effort. When the Senate's request came before the Lower House it was rejected by 34 votes to 27. Mr. Curtin insisted that the two Bills should stand or fall together. The Senate in turn rejected the Government motion in the Lower House that the request to the House of Representatives should not be pressed. On March 16 the two Houses resolved the deadlock at a conference where it was agreed that the Senate would pass the National Welfare Bill subject to its right to amend it while the Government would withdraw from the Income Tax Bill the proviso making the proclamation of that measure contingent on the passage of the Welfare Bill. The agreement relieved a period of tension in which a general election had seemed imminent. Another deadlock soon followed over a Bill introduced by Mr. Curtin providing that preference in employment in the public service should be given to troops and civilians serving in combat areas. Mr. Menzies moved an amendment to the Bill in the Lower House which was similar to one which the Senate had inserted in the Repatriation Bill giving preference in employment in Commonwealth service to ex-service men who had served abroad or in any combat area. On March 31 Mr. Curtin agreed to withdraw the Bill giving preference in employment in Commonwealth service ex-service men and civilians with service in combat areas, and that he would accept the Senate's amendment to the Repatriation Bill. The House of Representatives agreed to accept the amendment by 29 votes to 28. On April 1 the Senate, by 16 votes to 14, refused to accept the Government's proposed additions to the amendment on the ground that the Bill provided only for benefits to service men whereas the benefits to sailors and civilian pilots which the Government wished to add should be the subject of separate legislation.

On March 23 Mr. Curtin announced the safe arrival in Australia of General Morshead and the 9th Australian Division which had played a most distinguished part at Tobruk, el-Alamein and many other battles in Egypt, Libya and Syria. In welcoming the division home he paid a warm tribute to the British, Dutch and Australian

warships which had escorted the transports through seas where Japanese submarines were known to be operating. He read the following message from Mr. Churchill to the House of Representatives.

"I was very glad to hear that your fine division had arrived home safely. In the letter I gave General Morshead before his departure from Cairo I said that the Division left behind it a record of energy, courage, enterprise and daring which will be an imperishable memory among all the nations of the British Empire who in the Western Desert fought in true comradeship. In their new sphere of operations may all success accompany their arms."

On March 31 a vast multitude of Victorians welcomed the 9th Division at Melbourne. Such were the chief events of the quarter in the Commonwealth. They were discreditable to many of its politicians, whether Labour isolationists or timid members of the Opposition whose chief concern was to avoid the dangerous hazards of an election. Minor tactics as often before were preferred to the major strategy of statesmanship. No such blame attached to the vast majority of Australians who understood that they were faced by a long war and that for many months their task must be to fight a holding battle with all their might. In this conviction they had worked as they had never worked before in the new factories and had fought as valiantly and intelligently as they had always fought. The increasing output of ships, guns, aircraft, transport and, indeed, of almost every form of equipment, testified to their energy; the victories of their soldiers and airmen to their valour.

South
Africa

The Dominion Parliament opened on January 16. The Speech from the Throne said that as the war was "happily passing from South Africa" Parliament would be asked to consent to a proposal that South African forces should be used, on a voluntary basis, outside the African continent. Chief Justice de Wet, the Acting Governor-General, also said that during 1942 the production of gold had fallen short of the record figures for 1941, in consequence of difficult supply problems which had led to the closing of unprofitable mines and to a marked restriction of development. The Government, however,

were satisfied that the importance to the war effort of the production of gold was generally appreciated. Essential requirements to maintain production would be met.

On January 27 Field-Marshal Smuts moved that "in view of the progress of the war and the prospects of the early and complete expulsion of the enemy from the continent of Africa, this House approves the employment on the basis of voluntary recruitment of South African forces beyond this continent." The motion, he said, involved

"a modification of the war policy that we have been pursuing since 1939 when we entered the war with reservations that our forces would not be used overseas." The present motion contained two changes. First was the dispatch of troops overseas. Secondly, the condition that all such troops be volunteers. The volunteers would have to sign a new attestation. With the geographical extension there would also have to be a time extension. "We limited ourselves in the original attestation to service for four years or the duration of the war. We assumed that the war would be finished in four years. Probably it will not finish in four years. In these circumstances we shall have to submit . . . a new attestation for the duration of the war. I do not anticipate that we shall have difficulty in getting volunteers." No pressure would be brought to bear on any member of the forces to sign the new oath.

The debate thus opened was continued by Dr. Malan, Leader of the Opposition, who accused the Prime Minister of breaking faith on every possible ground, even on the ground that the Union Parliament's declaration of war in September did not involve a declaration of war against Germany, but a state of non-belligerence such as was then upheld by the United States. He also accused Field-Marshal Smuts of breaking his word to Parliament because South African airmen had flown over Crete, and South African forces had taken part in the Madagascar campaign.

The House of Assembly nevertheless passed the Prime Minister's motion by 75 votes to 49 on February 4. Next day the Senate passed it by 21 votes to 6. On February 10 the Government announced the appointment of Major-General Evered Poole to the command of the South African Armoured Division which was being formed "for service anywhere."

On January 14 Mr. H. G. Lawrence, Minister of the Interior, issued an account of the discovery and arrest of a large "spy-ring" in South Africa. It had been proved that Germans held in interment camps in the Union had formed an organization which was able both to receive messages from Germany and to pass information

picked up from fellow-prisoners as to the arming and positions of auxiliary cruisers to the Portuguese border. These internees had received orders not to attempt to escape as they were more useful to the Reich where they were. The discovery had been made a year ago, but was not disclosed until all possible information had been extracted from the documents seized. On March 5 an emergency regulation was gazetted proclaiming the eastern part of the Transvaal and the north of Natal adjoining Portuguese East Africa prohibited areas which none might enter unpermitted. On March 9 Mr. Lawrence published a statement that the Government "had plugged the last hole against espionage." He explained that the prohibited border strip would be patrolled by native guards and that these precautions were explained by the presence of Axis spies at Lourenço Marques.

There had been a recrudescence of sabotage in the Transvaal earlier in the quarter. On January 31 telephone lines were cut and the Brakpan engineering factory was partly wrecked by a bomb. On March 11 Sidney Leibrandt was found guilty of treason by a special court of three judges at Pretoria. This former pugilist had come by submarine from Germany to Namaqualand with a large sum of money in dollars and Union currency and a portable wireless transmitter. The language of the oath he administered to the party which he sought to form showed subversive and treasonable intent. He was condemned to death. Of the six persons tried with him two were found guilty. His condemnation did not, however, prevent further activity among the *Sturmjaers* (Storm-troops) of the extremist Afrikaner group. On March 5 the House of Assembly rejected a motion asking the Government to suppress Communist activities and to sever relations with the U.S.S.R. by fifty-four votes to thirty-six.

Speaking in the House on March 12, Field-Marshal Smuts reprehended attacks on Russia, and said that there was no evidence of any Russian connexion with the activities of local Communists. Discussing the Govern-

ment's policy when peace came to be discussed, he said that although he had spoken against the Treaty of Versailles he did not consider that it had caused the war. Its cause had been

"the spirit of domination" which had mastered Germany and its Führer. The Germans in South-West Africa had received the utmost consideration, but the Union had earned "nothing but disappointment" from them. As regards a peace settlement it was clear that the three aggressor Powers must be disarmed and must be kept disarmed. This, however, would not affect their economic life and they would have their fair share of raw materials. If they were left bankrupt and unless the articles of the Atlantic Charter were fulfilled, a foundation would be laid for a future war."

On January 18 the Finance Minister, Mr. Hofmeyr, introduced additional estimates. He asked for £21,500,000 of which £17,390,000 would be raised by loan and the rest from revenue. An extra £15,000,000 was needed for defence, bringing the total expenditure thereon to £96,000,000 against £72,000,000 in 1942. On February 24 he introduced the new Budget.

He estimated defence expenditure for 1943 "with necessary conservatism" at £96,000,000, of which he hoped to raise half by loan and half from revenue. The loan position remained sound. The national debt now totalled £416,000,000. A long list of increases in taxation included a 15 per cent increase in income-tax, the raising of the gold-mines' special contribution from 20 per cent to 22½ per cent, increases in the excess profits tax, the tax on dividends paid to oversea shareholders and increases in Customs and Excise duties. Postage was raised to 2d. and a 12½ per cent levy was imposed on telephone accounts. By these means Mr. Hofmeyr hoped to raise a total of just over £100,000,000.

Colonel Deneys Reitz, South African High Commissioner in London, was appointed Minister to the Greek, Dutch and Belgian Governments in London in March. Mr. S. F. Waterson, former High Commissioner in London, was sworn in as Minister of Commerce and Industries on January 28.

On January 22 Field-Marshal Smuts informed the House of Assembly that the casualties of the South African forces in the war had amounted so far to: killed in action, *Europeans*, 175 officers and 866 other ranks; *non-Europeans*, 74 other ranks; Missing, *Europeans*, 102 officers and 1,088 other ranks; *non-Europeans*, 1,037 other ranks. Wounded, *Europeans*, 356 officers and 3,246 other ranks; *non-Europeans*, 535 other ranks. Prisoners of war, *Europeans*, 795 officers and 10,391 other ranks; *non-Europeans*, 1,561 other ranks.

Southern
Rhodesia

A reshuffle of the Cabinet was announced on February 26. Sir Godfrey Huggins, the Prime Minister, took over Defence; Captain Bertin, a new-comer, became Minister of Justice and Native Affairs, and Colonel L. Guest became Air Minister. These changes were caused by the appointment of Mr. R. Tredgold, formerly Minister of Defence, Air and Justice, to a High Court judgeship. In March Sir Godfrey Huggins arrived in Cairo to inspect Rhodesian units serving in the Middle East. Justice R. J. Hudson was appointed Chief Justice in succession to Sir A. Fraser Russell early in January.

CHAPTER XIII

THE INDIAN SCENE

By Sir Frank Brown

Unknown to the public, 1943 began with a fresh anxiety for the Viceroy and his Executive Council. Writing to Lord Linlithgow on New Year's Eve from his palatial detention quarters at Poona, Mr. Gandhi stated that he had been freely partaking of the creature comforts provided there "as a matter of duty, never as a pleasure, in the hope that some day those who have the power will realize that they have wronged innocent men"—by the arrest and detention of Congress leaders. He had given himself six months from the date of his arrest, and he added the Hitlerian touch, "the period is drawing to a close : so is my patience." He felt called upon to crucify the flesh by fasting, but only as a last resort. In other words, he threatened, unless the Viceroy could convince him he was in the wrong, to fall back on the weapon of fasting he had employed nine times before to achieve some end or to expiate some error in relation to public events.

The correspondence, which was published, showed that the Viceroy's patience was not exhausted in the effort to induce Mr. Gandhi to obtain freedom by dissociating himself from the policy of mass civil disobedience adopted by the Congress Party in the previous summer, on his own strong insistence, which had led to serious outbreaks of disorder and a grievous hampering of the war effort. While deploring the disturbances the Mahatma insisted that the whole blame for them lay at the door of Government. The Viceroy replied that Government had ample evidence "that you and your friends expected the Congress policy to lead to violence ; and that you were prepared to condone it ; and that the violence that ensued formed part of a concerted plan conceived long

before the arrest of the Congress leaders." Similarly there was evidence that the campaign of sabotage had been conducted under secret instructions circulated in the name of the All-India Congress Committee, and that well-known Congress men had organized and freely taken part in acts of violence and murder. The Viceroy added expressions of deep regret that his correspondent was contemplating a fast, having regard to his health and his age (seventy-three), and said how much he would welcome a decision otherwise, "not only because of my own natural reluctance to see you wilfully risk your life, but because I regard the use of a fast for political purposes as a form of political blackmail (*himsa*) for which there can be no moral justification."

The Executive Council, with an Indian membership now greatly preponderant, gave the fullest support to this refusal, and made its position clear on the day, February 10, when, six months after his arrest, Mr. Gandhi began a twenty-one-days' fast, not, as in previous instances, "unto death," but "according to capacity," and with the intention to "survive the ordeal." The published statement announced that Government could not allow its policy to be influenced by the fast; that it could take no responsibility for the consequences on Mr. Gandhi's health; and that in order to make it clear where the responsibility lay, had offered to release him for the period of the fast. He had replied that he would abandon the intention altogether only if he were set free unconditionally. In the words of *The Times*, when the fast began:

"There is a distinction in degree but none in essence in the demonstrative threat which Mr. Gandhi now offers to his own life and attacks upon other people's lives in railway trains or police stations. Both are out of the realm of reason and in the category of intimidation."

From the outset, in pursuance of his design to survive the ordeal, Mr. Gandhi added juices of citrus fruit to the water he drank. He was attended by half a dozen doctors, mostly of his own choosing, and with the Surgeon-General of Bombay, Major-General R. H. Candy, at their head. Daily bulletins were issued. The Mahatma's

condition soon caused anxiety, and by the ninth day he had lost fourteen pounds in weight. On February 21 a crisis was reached, but thereafter he rallied and took nourishment in the form of sugar.

While the issue was in doubt great pressure was brought to bear on Government to release him. Under the leadership of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Jayakar and Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, a conference of prominent Hindu and other politicians, but with the Moslem League holding aloof, was held at Delhi on February 19 and 20. To a telegraphic appeal from the conference for the release (supplementing approach to the Viceroy), Mr. Churchill replied to the effect that, in view of the first duty of defending India from invasion, there could be no justification for distinguishing between Mr. Gandhi and other Congress leaders.

When tension was at its highest three members of the Viceroy's Executive Council, Mr. M. S. Aney, Mr. N. R. Sarkar (both former Hindu Congress adherents) and Sir Homi Mody, the Parsee holder of the Supply portfolio, resigned. In a joint statement, while placing on record their warm appreciation of the Viceroy's courtesy and consideration, they intimated that "certain differences arose on the action to be taken on Mahatma Gandhi's fast." They had, of course, shared in the collective responsibility of Government for the decision against unconditional release when the fast began.

After the crisis on the twelfth day the quantity of sweet limejuice taken by Mr. Gandhi averaged from four to six ounces daily, diluted in three or four times that quantity of water. He rallied surprisingly, and towards the close of the three weeks' abstention was visited by, and talked with, Mr. Rajagopalachari and other friends and political associates. On the morning of March 3 the "sort of fast" came to an emotional end with the singing of hymns led by his devotee, Miss Slade (Mirabai). He was "weak but cheerful." The abortive character of the fast led the *Daily Mail* to observe that "an old man who has so skilfully taken in public opinion on many occasions, has at last met his Waterloo." Throughout

the three weeks there had been no marked quickening of the public pulse outside political circles, though, as before and after, sporadic acts of violence under the waning "mass struggle" continued, with the leaders working underground. During the quarter there were sixty-one cases of attempted sabotage on the railways, four only of them being serious or involving loss of life. At the end of the quarter some 8,000 persons were detained or under sentence in respect to the civil disobedience campaign.

On the close of his fast Mr. Gandhi reverted to detention, with due medical care, but, as with other Congress leaders, his correspondence was again limited to relatives writing on matters of family concern. Applications from Mr. Rajagopalachari and others to visit the Mahatma and discuss the question of a settlement of the political deadlock was refused by the Viceroy. A request from Mr. W. Phillips, the personal representative of President Roosevelt, to be allowed to visit Mr. Gandhi was not acceded to. On March 23 Lord Linlithgow intimated his willingness to see the non-party leaders who, at a Bombay conference, had expressed the belief that, if released, Mr. Gandhi would not work against the war effort. But the deputation was abandoned when it became known that the Viceroy would give a written reply to their memorandum, but would not informally discuss with them the points raised.

The suggestion in Mr. Gandhi's letters to the Viceroy (and repeated in Parliament) of lack of evidence of Congress responsibility for the disturbances following the August arrests, was met by the publication during the fast of a detailed Statement by the Government of India, with numerous appendices, but with the intimation that there existed a large body of further evidence which, in the interests of security, it was undesirable to publish at present. It was claimed in an unnecessarily argumentative presentation, that Mr. Gandhi had gravely miscalculated the position.

He had assumed that the cause of the United Nations in India was lost, and that nothing could halt the victorious march of the Japanese. The entire phraseology of his writings in connection with the disobedience movement was "of a type associated in the ordinary man's mind with

violence." The appendices gave details of subversive speeches and writings of Congress leaders ; set out the programmes of violent action distributed at the time of the August arrests ; dwelt on the concerted attacks on communications in Eastern India at a time when Japanese invasion from Burma might be anticipated ; revealed the identity of Congress men proved guilty of violent action ; and quoted the revolutionary pamphlets circulated by underground conspirators in the name of the Congress.

The Statement was issued to Parliament as a White Paper on March 25 (Cmd. 6430, 1s. 3d.) and debated in the House of Commons on March 30 on motions by Mr. Amery, the Secretary of State for India, approving the continuance in force of proclamations by the Governors of six former Congress-ruled provinces under which they individually bear responsibility for the entire administration. Nearly all speakers in the debate recognized that the Government was without a practical alternative to the existing policy, and was bound, with a determined and ruthless enemy at the gate, to establish and maintain measures to overthrow what Mr. Gandhi himself had described in advance as a rebellion. A conspicuous feature of the debate was the desire shown in all quarters for the advancement of India in dignity and authority in the counsels of the British Commonwealth and the world.

The financial arrangements between India and Britain in relation to the war are so favourable to the former that her defence expenditure, though heavy in comparison with the demands of peace-time, contrasts favourably with that borne by the Dominions, and, as pointed out in the discussion of the Budget in the Central Legislative Assembly, is the equivalent of only ten days of the cost of the war to the British Exchequer.

Introducing the Budget on February 27, Sir Jeremy Raisman, Finance Member, stated that defence expenditure in 1942-43 was in round figures £179,000,000, and would be nearly £150,000,000 in 1943-44. The amounts included £37,000,000 and £12,500,000 respectively on capital account devoted to the construction of aerodromes, industrial expansion, reciprocal and new construction for the Royal Indian Navy and other such purposes. The few additional taxes he announced, apart from excise duties on tobacco (hitherto free) and vegetable products, affect almost entirely the propertied classes only. Sir Jeremy stated that, owing to the large purchases of Indian supplies debitable to Britain, some £300,000,000 of sterling securities had been repatriated during the war, and the process was continuing.

He added : "Thus India has completed the transition from a debtor to a creditor country and extinguished within a brief space of about three years accumulations over decades of its public indebtedness to the United Kingdom."

The Budget statement threw some light on the expansion of the armed forces and of industry in pursuance of war needs.

Sir Jeremy stated that for several months almost a million men had been employed on aerodrome construction. A steady stream of reinforcing R.A.F. squadrons was reaching India with their aircraft equipment and stores, side by side with vigorous expansion of the Indian Air Force. The force included an Indian Volunteer Reserve in which both Indians and Europeans serve.

During the quarter, as stated in Parliament, the average recruitment of the Indian Army was maintained at the high figure of 60,000 a month, the intake being conditioned only by the possibilities of providing adequate equipment and training. Allowing for wastage and casualties, the Indian Army at the end of the quarter was more than 1,500,000 strong. Besides being the largest voluntary army in the world, it also had the largest force of any one of the Dominions serving oversea. These figures, given by the Under-Secretary of State for India (Lord Munster), were exclusive of the considerable forces freely placed at the disposal of the King-Emperor by the ruling Princes. By the end of the quarter, also, the Royal Indian Navy had increased tenfold since the outbreak of war, and had taken an ever-growing part in defence around the shores of India.

An index of the continuous industrial advance of the country was afforded in the Railway Budget presented to the Central Legislative Assembly on February 15 by Sir Edward Benthall, Member for War Transport.

He stated that the surplus of receipts over expenditure had reached the unprecedented figure of some £27,250,000 ; and it was estimated that there would be a similar surplus for the year 1943-44. He estimated that the war material carried in the then current financial year would be 15,000,000 tons, as compared with 500,000 tons in peace-time. He added that the prosperity of the railways was the more remarkable in that it had been achieved in spite of an organized and determined attempt to put them out of action and in spite of unprecedented floods and cyclones.

The anxieties of mid-winter as to the food position were happily mitigated, but not entirely dispelled before the quarter closed. They arose from a variety of causes, including crop failure in certain areas (notably in Western India), the loss of rice supplies from Burma, and much hoarding for higher prices. The method of fixing price "ceilings" had proved ineffective in the absence of control of distribution and was abandoned.

The services as adviser of an expert from the Ministry of Food, Mr. H. D. Vigor, were lent to the Government of India. Official agencies were established to buy up food-grains in the markets for the purpose of meeting the needs of deficit areas, and grain movements were controlled. The announcement that both Australia and this country had agreed to ship wheat to India greatly eased the situation, which was further improved by the very favourable crop reports, leading to the estimate that the spring wheat crop would be one of the largest in Indian history, being some 2,000,000 tons heavier than in the previous year, in spite of floods, the Bengal cyclone, and harvest failures in certain areas.

In respect to criticisms of Army demands it was stated that not more than 1 per cent of the total food production would be required for the British, American, Chinese and Indian forces massed within the country; also that not more than 1 per cent would be exported to the Middle East and the East African countries.

Martial law proclaimed over an area of 30,000 square miles in Sind in June, 1942, had to be maintained, and the reasons were given in the Central Legislative Assembly on March 10 by the spokesman of the War Department. A fanatical Moslem tribe, the Hurs, had long terrorized the country-side and continued to do so after the arrest as a State prisoner of their leader, the Pir Pagaro ("Turbaned Holy Man") in October, 1941. His property was confiscated, and parachute troops were brought into action in the autumn of 1942 on a punitive expedition against the Hurs' stronghold. More than 100 desperadoes were either captured or shot dead. Some 2,000 were arrested, including a number of women who acted as spies. The Pir's fortress palace with its luxurious harem

and bathrooms, was destroyed, and only the mosque and other religious buildings were left standing. The "Holy Man" was tried by court martial at Hyderabad, Sind, from January 29 to February 23, and was found guilty of conspiracy to wage war against the King-Emperor and preparing to do so. He was executed on March 21. The chief witness against him was brutally beheaded by supporters of the Pir Pagaro. The Government spokesman in the debate on March 10 stated that since the application of martial law the incidence of murders and dacoities had been greatly reduced, many of the gangs had been broken up, and sabotage had almost entirely ceased. The restoration of order, however, was not yet complete. Some leaders had absconded and must be caught and brought to trial.

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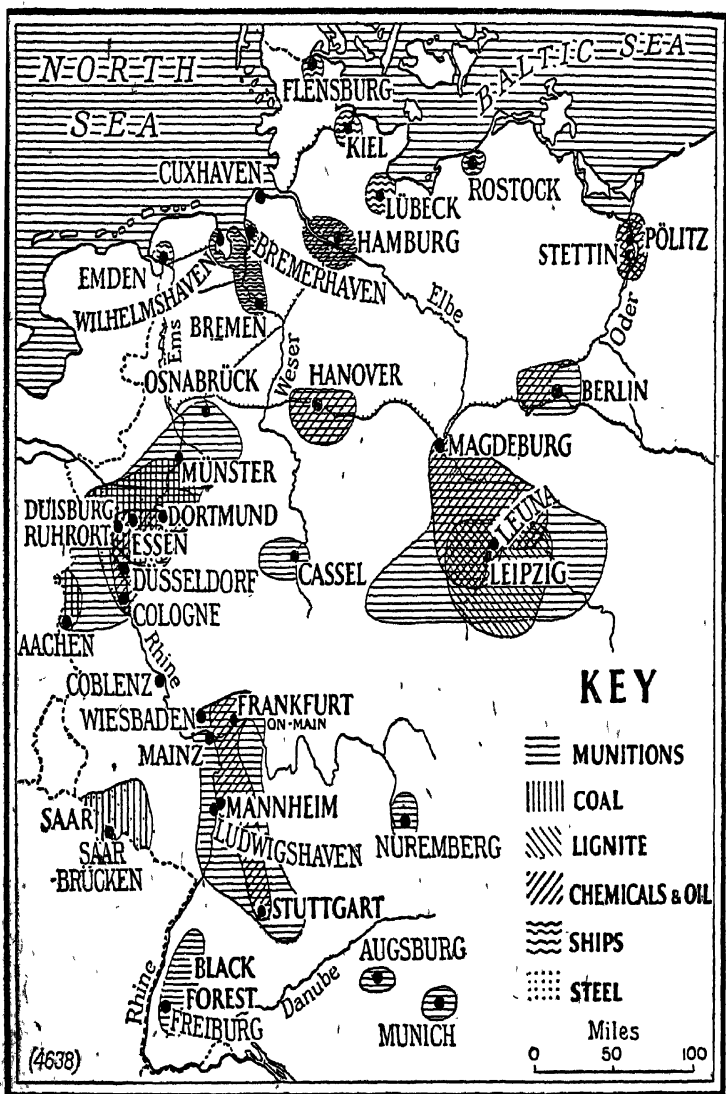
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